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R Sheridan

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Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

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SHERIDANIANA;

OR,

ANECDOTES OF THE LIFE

OF

**—RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN;
=**

HIS TABLE-TALK,

AND BON MOTS.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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NOTICE.

THE title of the following Volume sufficiently explains its object: it is intended to comprehend all that is most interesting and piquant about the late RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN — a person so eminently qualified to form the subject of such a work, that it seems somewhat singular that the *present* should be the first collection of SHERIDANIANA.

In the selection of materials for this Volume, the Editor has not only carefully searched every

work in which he was likely to find any reliques of Sheridan, in order to bring together in one the essence of many expensive volumes, and extracted from his parliamentary speeches such fragments of wit and eloquence as could, without injury to their lustre, bear, as it were, a separate setting,—but he has collected many brilliant sayings of that eminent person, which, like the congealed words in Rabelais, were floating about unheard in society, till a late *Life* of Sheridan called them into voice.

Had Mr. Moore's work at all answered the expectations of the admirers of wit and of Sheridan, who looked on the *annonce* of his life by *Mr. Moore*, as a promise of the opening of a rich mine of wit, the present Volume would not have been published. When the "*Life*" appeared, therefore, the disappointment was propor-

tionate to the expectation—the anecdotes and the *bons mots* were equally few and familiar—and, throughout the work, Mr. Moore seems to be far more anxious to prove that *he* can say fine things, than to show that Sheridan was in the habit of saying them. The *Sheridaniana* are intended to supply this deficiency in Mr. Moore's work.

In the selection of *anecdotes*, the Editor has not confined himself to such as do exclusive honour to Sheridan; but among those of another description, there will be found little that may not be charitably ascribed rather to a reckless gaiety of disposition, than to looseness of principle. Many of the anecdotes prove the tenderness of his heart to have been as remarkable as the brilliancy of his imagination.

From his unfinished dramas some fragments have been selected, which show “ the fine Roman hand” of the brilliant author of our best Comedy. To the fugitive poetry of Sheridan the Editor has also given a place : much of it is characterized by playful vivacity, and the rest, though not remarkable either for force or elevation, is full of grace and tenderness.

It is difficult to extract, even from such speeches as Sheridan’s, much that is fit for a publication like the present. Though profusely figured, and glittering with the reflected lights of wit—though there are plenty of eloquent and clever things in them, yet, like Gothic ornaments, when detached from the solid structure to which they belong, their beauty and appropriateness are lost. Some of Sheridan’s parliamentary retorts, however, not liable to this

objection, have been preserved—as well as some fragments from his famous speech on the impeachment of Hastings. That speech has, unfortunately for the cause of eloquence, and the oratorical fame of Sheridan, never been accurately reported. Its splendour is but the theme of tradition—but the fragments which have not lost all their original brightness in passing through the hands of the reporters, (some of which are preserved in this Volume) sufficiently attest, like the ornaments cast up from buried cities, the value and the beauty of what has been lost.

Some rejected passages from Sheridan's published plays have been also given. It was thought worth while to gather up those sparks which flew off in the polish of the diamond, which must always be of value, in proportion to

the beauty of the jewel of which they were once a part.

This Volume does not profess to be *Memoirs* of Sheridan—but a few lines, illustrative of the occasion of the anecdote or *bon-mot* given, have been, when necessary, inserted. Those who desire details on the public life of Sheridan, must have recourse to the works of Mr. Moore and Dr. Watkins.

In mentioning the name of the latter gentleman, it is but fair to remark, that in examining his *Memoirs* of Sheridan, it appears to us that Mr. Moore has been considerably indebted; at least to the *earlier* portion of them. It is, at all events, rather a suspicious circumstance to find Mr. Moore's quotations from Sheridan's early writings, and those of Dr. Watkins, so frequently beginning and ending with the same

words *—unless it proves a singular similarity of taste—a thing which Mr. Moore, from his constant abuse of the Doctor, would, we are sure, be the first to disclaim. Indeed Dr. Watkins is the only person throughout Mr. Moore's work, who receives any thing but laudation :—Whig and Tory, Ministers and Opposition, are all equally objects of Mr. Moore's admiration, while Dr. Watkins is destined to be the scape-goat who carries off the sins of all Mr. Moore's Noble and Right Honourable friends, and enables this new "Jupiter æquus" to scatter his indiscriminating favour upon them all.

* In the second volume too, we find similar instances. If Mr. Moore, as it would seem, really *did* make use of Dr. Watkins's work to save himself the trouble of reading the Parliamentary Debates, we think he might have acknowledged the obligation somewhat differently. But, though he has shown a laudable disposition to find out mistakes in Dr. Watkins's work, he has not, even in a single instance, succeeded.

It may be interesting to some readers to find here a complete list of Sheridan's dramas, or those in which he had any share. From this list it will be seen, that all the plays to which Sheridan is indebted for his fame were produced between 1775 and 1781.

"The Rivals," at Covent Garden, 1775.

"Saint Patrick's Day," a farce, 1775; this was written in two days, for the benefit of the facetious Larry Clinch, a brother actor, and intimate friend of his father, and the original Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

"The Duenna," at Covent Garden, 1775, which ran seventy nights without intermission.

- The "Trip to Scarborough," altered from Sir John Vanburgh; Drury Lane, 1777.

The "Tempest," altered from Shakspeare, with songs by Sheridan, and music by Linley; Drury Lane, 1777.

"The School for Scandal," Drury Lane, 1777.

"The Camp," musical entertainment, in two acts, Drury Lane, 1778.

"The Critic," Drury Lane, 1781; of which Sheridan said that he valued the first act more than any thing he ever wrote.

" Robinson Crusoe," a pantomime, 1781.

" Pizarro," Drury Lane, 1799 ; little more than a translation from the German. A few speeches in it, however, are by Sheridan.

He had, in his youth, begun a drama founded on " The Vicar of Wakefield ;" and had made some progress in another to be entitled " The Foresters." He afterwards projected a Comedy on Affectation ; and, from the fragments of it which remain, some of which will be found in the following pages, it is deeply to be regretted that he did not complete a design of which the first sketch is so masterly.

In the Press,

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK REYNOLDS, (the Dramatist,) WRITTEN by HIMSELF. 2 vols. 8vo.

SHERIDANIAN A.

1758.

SHERIDAN AT SCHOOL.

At the age of seven years, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (born in September, 1751) was, with his elder brother, Charles Francis, placed under the tuition of Mr. Samuel Whyte, of Grafton Street, Dublin.

The young Sheridans, however, were little more than a year under his care—and it may be consoling to parents who are in the first crisis of impatience, at the sort of hopeless stupidity which some children exhibit, to know, that the dawn of Sheridan's intellect was as dull and unpromising as its meridian day was bright ;

and that in the year 1759, he who, in less than thirty years afterwards, held senates enchained by his eloquence and audiences fascinated by his wit, was, by common consent both of parent and preceptor, pronounced to be "a most impenetrable dunce."

1768.

SHERIDAN AT HARROW.

At Harrow, to which he was sent in 1762, Richard was remarkable only as a very idle, careless, but, at the same time, engaging boy, who contrived to win the affection, and even admiration, of the whole school, both masters and pupils, by the mere charm of his frank and genial manners, and by the occasional gleams of superior intellect, which broke through all the indolence and indifference of his character.

In a letter from Dr. Parr to Mr. Moore, he says—"There was little in his boyhood worth

communication. He was inferior to many of his school-fellows in the ordinary business of a school, and I do not remember any one instance in which he distinguished himself by Latin or English composition, in prose or verse. Nathaniel Halhed, one of his school-fellows, wrote well in Latin and Greek. Richard Archdall, another school-fellow, excelled in English verse. Richard Sheridan aspired to no rivalry with either of them."

Richard Brinsley was in some degree instructed by Dr. Parr, then the first assistant in Harrow School. The care of his pecuniary concerns, in the absence of his parents, devolved on his maternal uncle, Mr. Richard Chamberlaine; and though he, of course, allowed his nephew every reasonable indulgence, a little incident, which happened at that time, placed Richard Brinsley's love of frolic, opposed to his uncle's prudent economy, in a ludicrous point of view. On occasion of the

grand annual contest for the silver arrow, Richard Brinsley was not a competitor for the prize of archery ; but distinguished himself by the delivery of a Greek oration. This, as he was intended for one of the learned professions, was a very judicious arrangement, as it exhibited his proficiency in scholarship ; and, in the embarrassed state of his father's circumstances, was far preferable to a frivolous competition, which involved a considerable degree of expense. So perhaps reasoned Mr. Richard Chamberlaine ; but if he did so, his nephew was determined to disappoint the old gentleman in any economical views he might have had in favouring this arrangement. The Greek oration was to be delivered in the character of a military commander ; and as the notions of costume were not so strict in those days as they are at present, Richard Brinsley, of his own authority, ordered the uniform of an English general officer to be made up for the occasion. Accordingly, on the important

day he appeared, not, indeed, in the elegant dress of an archer of Harrow; but in the equally expensive one of a military chief. Mr. Chamberlaine, to whom of course his tailor's bill was delivered, severely remonstrated with him on this unexpected piece of extravagance. Sheridan respectfully replied, that, as the speech was to be delivered in a martial character, he did not think the effect would have been complete without an appropriate dress; and that indeed so deeply was he himself impressed with that feeling, that he was sure if he had not been properly habited, he could not have delivered a word of the oration.

What necessary connexion there was between Greek and scarlet and gold regimentals, Mr. Chamberlaine could not exactly see; he was obliged, however, to overlook his nephew's vanity and love of show, not without a shrewd suspicion that the pleasure of *hoaxing* him had a share in Brinsley's suddenly declared martial taste.

1769.

SHERIDAN AND THE BOOTS.

A short time after his leaving Harrow, he went down to Bristol to spend a few days. Before he quitted that place, he wished to obtain, on credit, a new pair of boots. He called on two different sons of Crispin; ordered each to make him a pair of boots, and to bring them home at different hours of the day he had fixed for his departure, telling them they should be punctually paid on the delivery of their goods. On the appointed morning, the first that came found the young gentleman in expectation. He tried on the boots, found that one of them pressed upon his heel, directed the man to take it home, stretch it, and return with it the next morning; the man, who could not comprehend of what service a single boot could be to the possessor, obeyed. His brother Crispin soon followed: the same fault was found; the same directions repeated; and Sheridan

having obtained a boot from each, mounted his hack for the metropolis, leaving his dupes to lament their folly in being duped by a raw stripling.

1770.

SHERIDAN'S FIRST PLAY.

In early life Sheridan chose his companions from men of similar talents and similar dispositions with himself. He had formed a kind of literary partnership, after leaving Harrow, with his young schoolfellow, Halhed, who, like himself, originally projected living by literature. Their first joint production was a farce, or rather play, in three acts, called "Jupiter," written in imitation of the burletta of Midas, whose popularity seems to have tempted into its wake a number of these musical parodies upon heathen fable. The amour of Jupiter with Major Amphitryon's wife, and Sir Richard Ixion's courtship of Juno, who substitutes

Miss Peggy Nubilis in her place, form the subject of this ludicrous little drama, of which Halhed furnished the burlesque scenes ; while the form of a rehearsal, into which the whole is thrown, and which as an anticipation of "The Critic" is highly curious, was suggested and managed entirely by Sheridan.

According to their original plan for the conclusion of this farce, all things were at last to be compromised between Jupiter and Juno ; Amphytryon was to be comforted in the birth of so mighty a son ; Ixion, for his presumption, instead of being fixed to a torturing wheel, was to have been fixed to a vagrant monotroche, as knife-grinder, and a grand chorus of deities intermixed with "knives, scissors, pen-knives to grind," (set to music as nearly as possible to the natural cry,) would have concluded the whole.

1772.

MRS. SHERIDAN BEFORE MARRIAGE.

The following original and interesting Letter, addressed by Miss Linley (afterwards Mrs. Sheridan) to her confidential friend, Miss Saunders, presents a very interesting auto-biographical sketch of the most eventful period of her life.

BATH, MAY 2, 1772.

AFTER so long a silence, and after the many unfavourable reports which must, I dare say, have prejudiced my dear friend against me, how shall I endeavour to vindicate a conduct which has but too much deserved her censure? But if my dear friend will suspend her judgment till I have made her acquainted with my real motives, I flatter myself she will rather be induced to pity than condemn me.

At the time I wrote last, my mind was in a state of distraction not to be conceived; but I little thought, then, I should ever be forced to the cruel necessity of leaving my friends, and becoming an exile from every thing I hold dear.

In your answer to that letter, you hinted that you thought I loved Mr. R——, and that that was the cause of my uneasiness; but in that you, as well as many others, have been deceived. I confess myself greatly to blame in my behaviour to him; but I cannot explain myself on this subject, without acquainting you with the first cause of every uneasiness and indiscretion I have since been guilty of. Let me, then, my dear girl, beg your patience; for, though my story is long, and not very enlivening, yet such is the affection I have for you, that I cannot bear to think it possible, by the various reports which are so industriously propagated, I may entirely lose your good opinion and esteem,—a thing of all

others I should most regret. Excuse my being tedious ; and when you know the motive which induced me to take this last step, I flatter myself you will once more restore me to your friendship.

At the age of twelve years, I was brought from the country, where I had been all my life, and introduced into public, with a heart capable of receiving the softest impressions, and too sincere ever to suspect deceit in another. I was led into scene of dissipation, when reason and experience were not allowed to assist me in the many temptations which ever surrounded a young girl in such a situation.* But, though my credulity often made me feel for the pretended distresses of others, yet my heart was entirely free from love, nor could I be seduced by flattery and compliments ; I always considered them as words of

* The father of Miss Linley was connected with the Bath Theatre, of which his daughter was then the brightest ornament, both in person and accomplishments.

course; and never looked upon those people as my friends who made too much use of them.

In an evil hour my father was introduced to Mr. Mathews, as one who wished to serve him. My father, who is, like me, too apt to believe every one his friend who professes himself so, gladly embraced the opportunity of gaining the friendship of a man who had it in his power to be of service to him in his business: little did he think he was seeking the serpent who was designed to sting his heart. Mr. Mathews, from the first moment he saw me, resolved to make me his prey, and (child as I then was) left no means untried to make himself master of my affections, thinking but too justly that an impression fixed so early in life could not easily be removed. If it were possible to describe the many arts he made use of to effect this end, you would, I am sure, at once excuse me; but as these are not to be conceived by any one but those who are capable of

acting so basely, I must still rely on your goodness.*

For three years he never ceased his assiduities to me; and though at times my conscience would upbraid me, yet by his respectful behaviour, his counterfeit distress, and by averring sentiments foreign to his heart, he made me, instead of flying from him, not only pity him, but promise him my friendship. This was my first fault: he saw too plainly that he was not indifferent to me, and made use of every artifice to increase my regard.

About this time the people began to take notice of his particular behaviour to me, and my friends all spoke to my father to hinder my seeing him; but my father thinking that my

* Mathews was a captain in the army, and a married man; who, presuming upon the innocent familiarity which her youth and his own station permitted between them, had for some time not only rendered her remarkable by his indiscreet attentions in public, but had even persecuted her in private with those unlawful addresses and proposals which a timid female will sometimes rather endure, than encounter that share of the shame which may be reflected upon herself by their disclosure.

youth was a sufficient safeguard for me, and unwilling to lose, as he thought, a good friend, took no notice of this first alarm. I then began to feel myself, for the first time, wretchedly involved in an unhappy passion for a man whom (though I thought him equally to be pitied), yet it was criminal in me even to think of. When he went into the country for the summer, I resolved, whatever it cost me, to tear him from my heart, and when he returned, to avoid him every where. With these resolutions I consoled myself till winter. When he returned, he had not been in town a week before we had repeated invitations to his house. Conscious that I could never forget him, if I was always to be exposed to his solicitations, I informed my mother of every thing he had said to me, and, at the same time, told her how far he had gained my heart.

Oh, my dear friend, had my mother but then acted properly, I had now been happy; but she, too much attached to interest, laughed

at my uneasiness, and told me that novels had turned my head; and that I fancied if any one was civil to me, he must certainly be in love. She desired I would put such thoughts out of my head; for no man could think seriously of such a child. Thus was I again led into temptation, and exposed to all the artifices of a man whom I already loved but too well, and who was but too sensible of it. I could not fly from the danger; after my first reproof, I was ashamed to mention it again to my mother, and I had every thing to fear from my father's violent temper.

For another year we went on in the same manner; till, at last, finding it impossible to conquer my inclinations, he soon brought me to a confession of my weakness, which has been the cause of all my distress. That obstacle removed, many others fell of course, and the next season he prevailed on me to meet him at the house of a friend, as we were not permitted to talk together in public. During

this time I had many offers of marriage, very much to my advantage; but I refused them all. So far had he gained my love, that I resolved never to marry.

About this time, Mr. Long addressed me.* You know by what means I was induced to suffer his visits, though you do not know like-

* She had been at an early age (says Mr. Moore) on the point of marriage with Mr. Long, an old gentleman of considerable fortune in Wiltshire, who proved the reality of his attachment to her in a way which few young lovers would be romantic enough to imitate. On her secretly representing to him that she never could be happy as his wife, he generously took upon himself the whole blame of breaking off the alliance, and even indemnified the father, who was proceeding to bring the transaction into court, by settling 3000*l.* upon his daughter. Mr. Sheridan, who owed to this liberal conduct not only the possession of the woman he loved, but the means of supporting her during the first years of their marriage, spoke invariably of Mr. Long, who lived to a very advanced age, with all the kindness and respect which such a disinterested character merited.

wise that another great motive was the hope of forgetting Mathews, and retiring into solitude. After I had consented to receive Mr. Long's visits, I forbade Mathews ever to speak to me ; to the consequences of which you yourself were witness. He immediately pretended to be dying, and by that artifice very nearly made me really so. You know how ill I was for a long time. At last he wrote me word, that he must see me once more ; that he would then take a final leave of me, and quit the kingdom directly ; but he could not resolve to go without seeing me. I was weak enough to comply with his request, as I thought it would be the last time.

Some way or other, my mother was told of it, when she taxed me with it. I immediately confessed every thing that had passed since I first acquainted her with his behaviour. She was at first greatly enraged ; but on my telling her how unexceptionably he had behaved, she was pacified, and consented to conceal it from

my father. And indeed, my dear, had any impartial person been present at our meeting, they would have thought Mathews the most unhappy but amiable man in the world; his behaviour was always consistent with the strictest honour; nor did he ever, in the smallest degree, give me any reason to think he had any intentions that were in the least alarming to my virtue. Deceived by such conduct, his merit shone more conspicuous; nor did I wish to get the better of my passion for one whom I thought every way so worthy of it. I considered myself as the cause of all his wretchedness, and thought it would be the height of cruelty if I did not endeavour to alleviate it. But to proceed; my mother resolved to see Mathews herself, and therefore insisted that I should write, and desire to see him again that evening. I did so, and my mother went in my place. You may imagine he was very much surprised at seeing her. She went with a full resolution to upbraid him; yet so far did his

arts prevail, that he not only made her forgive but pity him, and promise that this should never make any alteration in our behaviour to him; and we would still continue our visits and intimacy with him. He promised, however, that he never would for the future attempt to see me.

About this time my marriage with Mr. Long broke off, and my father went to London, to commence a law-suit. During the time he was absent, I went on a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Norton, where you saw me. She had been informed by undoubted authority that my father would not only lose his suit, but that I should be exposed in the public court; as Mr. Long had been informed of my meeting Mathews, and intended to make use of that as a plea in court. This being told me suddenly, and at a time when my spirits were greatly distressed, flung me into a high fever. I lost my senses some time, and when I recovered was so weak, and had such strong symptoms of a rapid de-

cline, that, when my father returned, I was sent to the Wells to drink the waters. While I was there, I was told that Mathews, during my illness, had spoken disrespectfully of me in public, and had boasted it was owing to my love for him I was so ill. This behaviour from one for whom I had suffered so much, shocked me greatly, and I resolved in my first heat of passion that he should not have it in his power to triumph over my weakness. The resentment I felt was of service to me, as it roused me from a state of stupid despondence, which perhaps would have occasioned my death. It was then that you received my first letter, which must have shown you in what a wretched state of mind I was.

When I had so far recovered my spirits and health as to be able to walk and ride, I became acquainted with Mr. R——, who, from the first time he saw me, was particular in his behaviour to me. I did not at first observe it, and, as I thought him an agreeable man, and one who I

was told bore an unexceptionable character, I did not avoid him so much as I certainly ought. I wished, likewise, by turning my attention to him, to eradicate every impression of Mathews; but, though Mr. R. behaved with the greatest delicacy, I found it impossible for me to love him. I went on in this manner some time, and by Mr. R.'s attention to me, incurred the ill will of all the ladies, who did not spare to censure my conduct; but as I was conscious in my own heart of no ill, and wished to convince Mathews he had not so much reason to boast of his conquest, I paid very little attention to the envy of the women.

Mr. R—— had not, as yet, made any professions; but one day he confessed to me that he loved me, but that it was not in his power to marry publicly, as he was entirely dependent on his father, except a pension which he had; but, at the same time begged me to consent to marry him privately, and to go off with him to any part of the world, till his father died; when

he said he would marry me again in the face of the world. This proposal, had I loved him, I should certainly have rejected ; but in the state of mind I then was, I was very angry, and refused seeing him for a great while.

At this time, Mr. and Mrs. Norton came over to be with me, as they had heard of R——. Through his means, Mr. R—— entreated me to forgive him, and permit him to be on the footing of a friend, and assured me I never should have farther cause to be offended with him. As Mr. Norton, under whose protection I then was, had no objection, and as I really had an esteem for Mr. R——, and thought him a good young man, I consented, and we continued to walk and ride together, but never without Mr. Norton. I was thus situated when Mathews came to the Wells in his road to Wales. He had been extremely ill at Bath, and when I saw him in the public walk at the Wells, I could scarce keep myself from fainting. There was such an

alteration in his person that I could not believe it possible. He spoke to me once in the walk, and asked me if I resolved to be his death; declared his illness proceeded from the accounts he had heard of me and R——, and that he was now going into the country to die. You may be sure I was greatly affected with his words; but, as I had suffered so much in my reputation by being seen with him, I would not stay to explain myself, or upbraid him with his behaviour to me; I merely told him that the only way to convince me of his sincerity was to leave me, and never see me more. I left him immediately and went home; where, soon after, a lady informed me he had fainted in the Long Room, and that his friends had taken him to Wales, given over by all. This news made me relapse, and had very nearly cost me my life, till I heard again that he was well, and in good spirits, laughing at my distress, and exulting in the success of his scheme. This once more raised my resentment, and I

was resolved to encourage Mr. R——; and though I could not consent to go off with him, I told him (with my father's consent), that when it was in his power, if he still retained his love for me, and I was free from any other engagements, I would marry him. When I returned to Bath, he followed me, but as he was very much talked of, I would not suffer him to be so particular. When he was going to D——, he begged me to give him a letter to you, that he might, by you, sometimes hear from me; as I had refused to correspond with him. As I wished to have my dear girl's opinion of him, I was not unwilling to trust him with a letter, in which I mentioned something relative to my misfortunes; but luckily mentioned no names, nor could he, if he did read it, understand *whom* or *what* it meant. He wrote to me that he was in D——, but never mentioned your name, which I was surprized at, and as I had not heard any thing from you, was a good deal hurt, thinking you would not keep your

word with me. In answer to his letter, I desired to know if he had seen you, and begged to be informed of some other circumstances in his letter, which made me uneasy. To this I received no answer, and the account you gave me afterwards, convinced me that he was like all other men—deceitful. I then gave him entirely up, and contented myself with thinking how unworthy all men were of a woman's affection !

I was in this state of mind when Mathews returned ; when, in spite of all I could do or say, I was obliged to visit them, and scarcely a day passed without my having some conversation with him. In these conversations he cleared himself of the imputations alleged against him, and set my conduct in such a point of view, that he made me appear the criminal and himself the injured person. This and being constantly with him, joined to his engaging behaviour, soon regained him that love which had never been quite extinguished.

That gained, I was soon prevailed on to see him, but this did not hinder him from behaving so particular in public, that at last every body talked of it, and many people spoke to my father.

I was one night going to bed, when I heard my father and mother talking very loud, and my name and Mathews's were repeated very often; this induced me to listen, and I heard my mother tell my father that I was miserable, and that Mathews was equally wretched; that we had loved one another for these some years, and that she was sure it would be my death. My father seemed sometimes to pity and sometimes to condemn me, but at last he resolved I should never see him again. In the morning when I came to breakfast, my spirits were low, and I could not refrain from tears; this soon brought on an explanation with my father, to whom I confessed every thing that had passed; his behaviour was tender to a degree, and by that method he gained more upon me than if

he had treated me harshly. Anger I can withstand, but tenderness I never could. My father after many arguments, wherein he convinced me of the folly, if not wickedness, of such a connexion, made me promise never to see him more, and told me he would break of all intercourse with the family immediately. In the afternoon of this day, Mrs. Sheridan called by Mathews's desire, to know the reason why they had not seen me that day.

Old Mr. Sheridan (who is now in Dublin,) is my father's particular friend. When they came to settle in Bath,* the strictest intimacy commenced between our families. Miss Sheridan is the only person (besides yourself) that I would place any confidence in ; she is one of

* It was about the middle of the year 1770, that the Sheridans took up their residence in King's Meadstreet, Bath, where an acquaintance commenced between them and Mr. Linley's family, which the kindred tastes of the young people soon ripened into intimacy, and the two brothers became deeply enamoured of Miss Linley

the worthiest girls breathing, and we have been always united in the strictest friendship. The same connexion subsists between our two younger sisters. There are two brothers, who, on our first acquaintance, both professed to love me ; but, though I had the greatest esteem for them, I never gave either of them the least hope that I should ever look on them in any other light than as the brothers of my friend ; I own *I preferred the youngest*, as he is by far the most agreeable in person, understanding, and accomplishments. He is a very amiable young man, beloved by every one, and greatly respected by all the better sort of people in Bath. He became acquainted with Mathews, and was at first deceived in him, but he soon discovered the depravity of his heart, under the specious appearance of virtue, which he at times assumed ; but perceiving the attachment between us, he resolved to make use of a little art to endeavour if he could to save me from such a villain. For this purpose, he disguised

his real sentiments, and became the most intimate friend of Mathews, who at last entrusted him with all his designs in regard to me, and boasted to him how cleverly he had deceived me ; for that I believed him to be an angel.

Excuse my being thus tedious, but it was necessary to let you so far into my connexion with the Sheridans, before I could account for my behaviour latterly.

When Mr. Sheridan came to me in the evening, I only told him something had happened to make me uneasy ; but bid him tell Mathews I would write to him. I accordingly wrote, and told him every circumstance that had happened, showed him how impossible it was for us to continue any such connexion, and begged (for still I thought him worthy) that he would write to tell me he was convinced by my arguments, and that we might part friends, though unhappy ones. He wrote to me, and comforted me greatly, by assuring me of his approbation of my conduct, and that he was

ready to acquiesce in any thing to make me happy, as he was unwilling to see my father. Mr. Sheridan was appointed to settle every thing; he accordingly came to my father, and told him what Mathews had said, and that he intended to write to my father and bind himself in the most solemn manner never to see me again. My father was satisfied with this, and pitied Mathews greatly. He kept his word, and my father was happy that he had settled every thing so amicably.

Mr. Sheridan was with me every day, and did every thing in his power to make me happy. He said if Mathews ever broke his word to my father, he never would be seen with him again; as he had engaged him in the affair, he was resolved to act the part of a man of honour. I applauded his sentiments, but said I thought it impossible that Mathews ever should;—the next day convinced me how cruelly I had deceived myself. I received a letter from Mathews, wherein he told me he was going to Lon-

don, but would return in less than two months, and if I did not consent to see him sometimes, he would shoot himself that instant. He said my answer would determine his fate. This letter flung me into fits, as I must either break my word to my father, or consent to the death of the man on whose life my own depended. At last I wrote and expostulated with him once more on the baseness of such a proceeding. This letter, instead of having the wished effect, produced another still more alarming; in this he flung off the tender behaviour for which I always loved him, and put on the language of a tyrant—told me he would see me, that no father on earth should hinder him, and if I would not consent, he would take me off by force. I answered this with some warmth, as I began to see I had been deceived in him. I then insisted he should never write to me again; but he contrived to make me read a letter directed in another hand, wherein he told me we had both been deceived through some mistake;

said he had something to communicate of the utmost consequence to my future happiness; and if I would indulge him with ten minutes' conversation, he never after would desire to see me again; but if I refused this last request, I must expect the worst.

Terrified as I was, with no friend to advise me, I at last consented, and appointed an hour, but the moment he saw me, he locked the door, and drawing a pistol from his pocket uttered the most horrid imprecations; and swore if I would not bind myself by the most solemn oaths to see him again on his return from London, he would shoot himself before my face. Think, my dear girl, on my cruel situation; what could I do? Half distracted, I told him I would do any thing rather than see him commit so rash an action. This was Saturday, and I promised him (if I was alive) to see him on Wednesday evening during the Concert. On this condition he let me go.

I was to spend the day with Miss Sheridan,

who was ill with the tooth-ache. All the time I was with her, I was resolving in my own mind what way I was to act. To break my word with my father was impossible. If I did not see Mathews, I expected worse to ensue. What resource was there left? At length (I tremble while I write) I came to the horrid resolution of destroying my own wretched being, as the only means to prevent my becoming still more guilty, and saving my parents from still more distress. With these horrid thoughts, I searched Miss Sheridan's room for some laudanum, which I knew she had for the tooth-ache; I found a small bottle full, and put it in my pocket.

The next day (Sunday) after church, I left my mother and sisters walking. I sat down, made my will, and wrote a letter to my father, and one to Mathews. While I was about it, Mr. Sheridan came in; he had observed me taking the laudanum, and when he saw me writing, he seemed very much alarmed. At last,

after swearing him to secrecy, I told him what I intended to do, and begged him to take charge of the letters. He used every argument in the world to dissuade me from it; but finding them all useless, he entreated me at least not to take it till the afternoon, as he then would tell me something which he was sure would make me lay aside such thoughts entirely. Fearful of his betraying me, I consented; but the moment he was gone took half the quantity, and after dinner, finding it had no effect, I took the rest. My fears were true. He had gone to Dr. Harrington and Dr. W., and begged of them for God's sake to go to our house that night, in case I should have taken it before he returned in the evening. When he came I was on the settee in a state of lethargy. He immediately ran for the Doctors; but before they could give me any assistance, I dropped down, as they thought,—dead. I lay for some time in that dreadful state, till by force they opened my teeth, and poured something down

my throat, which made me bring up a great deal of the poison.

To describe the distress of my family at this time is impossible ; but such a scene by all accounts cannot be conceived or imagined. It was happy for me that I was insensible of it, as it would certainly have had a severer effect upon me than all the poison.

After I had taken every thing that was proper, I was put to bed, where I passed the night in the most dreadful agonies of mind, at the thoughts of what would be the consequence of this affair.

Monday evening, Sheridan came to me. He expostulated with me, with the greatest tenderness, and showed me the dreadful crime I had been about to commit, and for one who was every way unworthy of my least consideration. He then told me every circumstance relative to myself, which Mathews had told him. He showed me letters he had received from him, and wherein his villany was fully explained.

Judge what must be my feelings, on finding the man, for whom I had sacrificed life, fortune, reputation, every thing that was dear, the most abandoned wretch that ever existed. In his last letter to Sheridan he had told him that I had given him so much trouble, that he had the greatest inclination to give me up, but his vanity would not let him do that without having gained his point. He therefore said he was resolved the next time I met him to throw off the mask, and if I would not consent to make myself still more infamous, to force me, and then leave me to repent at leisure. He then told how he had acted on Saturday; and that I had promised to see him on Wednesday. He then said he would sufficiently revenge himself for all the trouble I had given him; but if I changed my mind, and would not see him, he was resolved to carry me off by force. The moment I read this horrid letter I fainted, and it was some time before I could recover my senses sufficiently to thank Mr. Sheridan for his opening my eyes. He

said he had made Mathews believe he was equally infamous, that he might the sooner know his designs ; but he said it was not in his power to appear on a friendly footing any longer with such a villain. Mr. Sheridan then asked me what I designed to do. I told him my mind was in such a state of distraction, between anger, remorse, and fear, that I did not know what I should do ; but as Mathews had declared he would ruin my reputation, I was resolved never to stay in Bath. He then first proposed my going to France, and entering a convent, where he said I should be safe from all kind of danger, and in time I might recover my peace and tranquillity of mind ; his sister would give me letters of recommendation to St. Quintin, where she had been four years, and he would go with me to protect me ; and after he had seen me settled, he would return to England, and place my conduct in such a light that the world would applaud and not condemn me.

You may be assured I gladly embraced his

offer, as I had the highest opinion of him. He accordingly settled every thing ; so that we resolved to go on that fatal Wednesday which was to determine my fate. Miss Sheridan came to me, approved the scheme; and helped me in putting up my clothes. I kept up my spirits very well till the day came, and then I thought I should go distracted. To add to my affliction, my mother miscarried the day before, owing to the fright of Sunday : the being obliged to leave her in such a situation, with the thoughts of the distress in which my whole family would be involved, made me almost give up my resolution ; but, on the other hand, so many circumstances concurred to make it absolutely necessary, that I was in short almost distracted.

At last Sheridan came with two chairs, and having put me half fainting into one, and my trunks into the other, I was carried to a coach that waited in Walcot-street. Sheridan had engaged the wife of one of his servants to go with me as a maid, without my knowledge. You

may imagine how pleased I was with his delicate behaviour. Before he could follow the chairs he met Mathews, who was going to our house, as I had not undeceived him for fear of the consequence. Sheridan framed some excuse, and after telling him that my mother had miscarried, and that the house was in such confusion it was impossible for him to go in, begged he would go to his sister's, and wait there till he sent for him, as he had an affair of honour on his hands, and perhaps should want his assistance; by this means he got rid of him.

We arrived in London about nine o'clock the next morning.* From London we went to Dun-

* Sheridan was at this time little more than twenty, and his companion just entering her eighteenth year. On their arrival in London, with an adroitness which was at least very dramatic, he introduced her to an old friend of his family (Mr. Ewart, a respectable brandy-merchant in the City,) as a rich heiress who had consented to elope with him to the Continent; in consequence of which the old gentleman, with many commendations of his wisdom, for having given up the imprudent pursuit of Miss Linley, not only accommodated the fugitives with a passage on board a ship, which he had

kirk by sea, where we were recommended to an English family, who treated me very politely. I changed my name to Harley, as I thought my own rather too public. From thence we pro-

ready to sail from the port of London to Dunkirk, but gave them letters of recommendation to his correspondents at that place, who with the same zeal and despatch facilitated their journey to Lisle. On their leaving Dunkirk, as was natural to expect, the chivalrous and disinterested protector degenerated into a mere selfish lover. It was represented by him, with arguments which seemed to appeal to prudence as well as feeling, that after the step which they had taken, she could not possibly appear in England again but as his wife. He was, therefore, he said, resolved not to deposit her in a convent, till she had consented, by the ceremony of a marriage, to confirm to him that right of protecting her which he had now but temporarily assumed. It did not, we may suppose, require much eloquence to convince her heart of the truth of this reasoning; and accordingly, at a little village not far from Calais, they were married about the latter end of March, 1772, by a priest well known for his services on such occasions. They thence immediately proceeded to Lisle, where Miss Linley, as she must still be called, giving up her intention of going on to St. Quintin, procured an apartment in a convent, with the determination of remaining there till Sheridan should have the means of supporting her as his acknowledged wife.

ceeded to Lisle, where by chance Sheridan met with an old schoolfellow, who immediately introduced us to an English family, with whom he boarded. They were very amiable people, and recommended us to a convent, which we resolved to accept without going farther.

After we had settled every thing, and I had entered the convent, Sheridan proposed returning to England; but while he was preparing to go, he received a letter from Mathews, who, after abusing him in the most scandalous manner, insisted on seeing him in London to give him satisfaction.* This was a stroke so very unexpected, that for a long time I could resolve on nothing. At last, I begged Sheridan not to think of returning till he had heard more from England. He was very unwilling to stay; but

* It appears, that, for the first four or five weeks during which the young couple were absent, Mr. Mathews never ceased to haunt the Sheridan family with inquiries, rumours, and other disturbing visitations; and at length, urged on by the restlessness of revenge, inserted a violent advertisement in the Bath Chronicle, calling Sheridan a liar and a treacherous scoundrel.

as I urged so close, and was so very unhappy, he consented.

While we were in this situation, my father arrived at Lisle. He had written to us, but his letters miscarried, and we did not know how to write to them, till we heard first. My father not receiving any intelligence, came in search of us to Lisle, where he found us. He behaved with the greatest tenderness to me, and expressed his warmest gratitude to Sheridan; but he said my enemies had raised so many wicked reports as to my going, that my friends thought it absolutely necessary for me to return and contradict them. He promised me if I chose to return to the convent in a few months after I had been at home, I should have his consent; but he insisted on my returning then with him.

Though it was very disagreeable to me to return, yet as I could not refuse any thing my father wished me, and as I thought he would keep his promise, I consented; and, soon after,

we set off for England. When we got to London, Sheridan went out to speak to a friend of his, but staying longer than he intended, my father was very uneasy. I did not know the reason till dinner, when he returned with his friend, and I was then told that Mathews was in town, and that Sheridan had seen him; but he was such a coward that Sheridan could not prevail on him to fight. He had therefore written an advertisement to be put in the newspapers, wherein he begged Sheridan's pardon for the abuse with which he had loaded him. I was very happy to hear it ended so well, and we set off for Bath the next day, in tolerable spirits. His family met us at our house, and we drank tea together very happily. After tea the brothers went out together; the elder did not return, but Richard, my friend, returned to supper, during which he told me he was going to take a ride with his brother in the morning. We parted at night, after he had promised to come with his sister to spend the next day with

us; but judge of my astonishment when his sister came to me and told me that both her brothers went off together at twelve o'clock that night, and she had not seen nor heard any thing from them since. We passed the day in the greatest distress. In the evening we were told they were gone to London to demand satisfaction of Mathews, for belying them to each other, and likewise to get a proper concession to be put in the newspapers; as Sheridan found, on his arrival at Bath, that Mathews had put a most abusing paragraph in the papers respecting him.

They are not yet returned. When this dreadful affair will end, God only knows! For my own part, I have not eaten nor slept since they went. My only hope is Mathews's cowardice, as every one says he will stoop to any thing rather than fight.

Thus have I, my dear friend, displayed every action of my life to you, my judge; but do not let the ill-nature of the world bias your judg-

ment. I know that many have traduced my character, and I am told that Mr. R— has said many disrespectful things of me in Dublin ; that he calls me jilt, and says I was-engaged to him ; but his own heart must acquit me of using him ill in any respect.

And now, my dear friend, for I will imagine you will still permit me to call you so, let me entreat your forgiveness for troubling you with this tedious epistle ; but I flatter myself you will read my misfortunes with an unprejudiced eye, and as I think you have too good an opinion of me to imagine I would do any thing intentionally criminal, I hope you will excuse my indiscretions, and pity my distresses. I have laid before you every article of my life ; do you, according to your own heart, excuse or condemn me : but if, after you know my temptations and trials, you can excuse the weakness of a heart but too susceptible, let me beg of my dear girl to undeceive her acquaintance, or any one who is prejudiced against me by the malicious re-

port of my enemies, and convince them that I am not so guilty as unfortunate. Adieu ! if you will still permit me the happiness of your friendship, write to me, and give me your opinion of my conduct freely, and favour me with your advice in regard to my future behaviour to Sheridan. Let me conjure you to write soon, as till then I shall imagine you have given me up entirely ; which would be the means of making me still more wretched, as there is no one on earth whose good opinion I would wish to retain more than your's. I should never have troubled you with this long letter, if I had not hoped, from your gentle disposition, that you would, by considering what I have gone through, be sooner brought to forgive my errors. I have been many days writing this, but I have not yet heard the event of Sheridan's journey. I am greatly distressed, and my mind is at present in great agitation. God only knows what will become of me ! I have almost lost every hope of happiness in this world.

Death or a convent is the only view on which I can turn my eyes with any pleasure. I hope one way or other my fate will soon be decided, as I cannot endure my present feelings. Once more, adieu ! May God for ever bless and make you as completely happy as I am miserable. Write to me I entreat you ; let me not think I am forsaken by all the world. You are the only comfort remaining ; let me therefore be assured of your friendship ; the world I despise. Give my kindest love to your sister ; may she with you continue to enjoy a long course of uninterrupted happiness, and may those pangs ever be a stranger to your breast, which now rend the heart of your sincere though wretched friend.

P. S. As I will think my dear friend has been the partaker of my griefs, I have opened my letter once more to assure you, that I am now a little easier. I have this moment heard that Sheridan is returned. He has seen Mathews, and obliged him to fight ; he dis-

armed him, and gave him his life, after making him promise to beg pardon in the newspapers.* Every thing is settled to his satisfaction, and I expect to see him every minute. I am just told he is below. Adieu ! my dear girl, and believe me yours,
E. LINLEY.†

* This alludes to the first duel fought by Sheridan, when Mathews was compelled to ask his life. Mathews, being afterwards almost universally shunned for his disgraceful conduct throughout this affair, which he had shamefully misrepresented, at length wished to retrieve his character by fighting a second duel. Sheridan readily accepted the challenge. Mr. Moore has given the particulars very minutely. Both the combatants were desperately wounded, and their swords broken. As neither would descend to ask their lives, they were separated by their seconds.

† Throughout this interesting sketch, Miss Linley studiously conceals her marriage with Sheridan, which was not then publicly known. Subsequent to this, she appeared in the oratorios at Covent Garden ; and Sheridan, though prevented by the vigilance of her father from a private interview, had frequent opportunities of seeing her in public. At length, after a series of stratagems and scenes, which convinced Mr. Linley that it was impossible much longer to keep them asunder, he consented to their union, and on the 13th of April, 1773, they were married by license.

1773.

SHERIDAN'S INDOLENCE.

Sheridan was now married to Miss Linley, with her father's consent. A curious instance of the indolence and procrastinating habits of Sheridan used to be related by Woodfall, as having occurred about the time of the marriage. A statement of his conduct in the duels with Mathews, about Miss Linley, having appeared in one of the Bath papers, so false and calumnious as to require an immediate answer, he called upon Woodfall to request that his paper might be the medium of it. But wishing, as he said, that the public should have the whole matter fairly before them, he thought it right that the offensive statement should first be inserted, and in a day or two after, be followed by his answer, which would thus come with more relevancy and effect. In compliance with his wish, Woodfall lost not a moment, in transcribing the calumnious article

into his columns—not doubting, of course, that the refutation of it would be furnished with still greater eagerness. Day after day, however, elapsed, and, notwithstanding frequent applications on the one side, and promises on the other, not a line of the answer was ever sent by Sheridan,—who, having expended all his activity in assisting the circulation of the poison, had not industry enough left to supply the antidote.

1773.

FUGITIVE POETRY BY SHERIDAN.

At East Burnham, Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan were living in a small cottage, to which they had retired immediately on their marriage, and to which they often looked back with a sigh in after times, when they were more prosperous, but less happy. It was during a very short absence from this cottage that the following lines were written by him :—

“ Teach me, kind Hymen, teach—for thou
Must be my only tutor now —

Teach me some innocent employ,
That shall the hateful thought destroy,
That I this whole long night must pass
In exile from my love's embrace.
Alas, thou hast no wings, oh Time ! *
It was some thoughtless lover's rhyme,
Who, writing in his Chloe's view,
Paid her the compliment through you.
For had he, if he truly lov'd,
But once the pangs of absence prov'd,
He'd cropt thy wings, and, in their stead,
Have painted thee with heels of lead.
But 'tis the temper of the mind,
Where we thy regulator find.
Still o'er the gay and o'er the young
With unfelt steps you flit along, —
As Virgil's nymph o'er ripen'd corn,
With such ethereal haste was borne,
That every stock with upright head,
Denied the pressure of her tread.
But o'er the wretched, oh, how slow
And heavy sweeps thy scythe of woe !
Oppress'd beneath each stroke they bow,
Thy course engraven on their brow.
A day of absence shall consume
The glow of youth and manhood's bloom ;

* It will be perceived that the eight following lines
are the foundation of the song "What bard, oh Time,"
in the Duenna.

And one short night of anxious fear
Shall leave the wrinkles of a year.
For me, who, when I'm happy, owe
No thanks to Fortune that I'm so,
Who long have learn'd to look at one
Dear object, and at one alone.
For all the joy, or all the sorrow,
That gilds the day or threatens the morrow
I never felt thy footsteps light,
But when sweet love did aid thy flight,
And, banish'd from his blest dominion,
I cared not for thy borrow'd pinion.

“ True she is mine, and, since she's mine,
At trifles I should not repine ;
But, oh ! the miser's real pleasure
Is not in knowing he has treasure ;
He must behold his golden store,
And feel and count his riches o'er.
Thus I, of one dear gem possess,
And in that treasure only blest,
There every day would seek delight,
And clasp the casket every night.

DR. JOHNSON AND SHERIDAN.

When Sheridan withdrew his wife from the musical profession, many persons censured his conduct on the ground of his having no property

nor any profession by which he could support a wife and family. On the other hand, a few persons attempted his vindication, as being actuated by delicate feeling, and virtuous intrepidity. Among these was Dr. Johnson, of whose reasoning upon this occasion his biographer has given the following statement, without mentioning the names of the parties, both of whom were living at the time of his publication. "We talked," says Boswell, "of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded, so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational, without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed,

‘He resolved wisely and nobly, to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife sing publicly for hire? No, Sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not *prepare* myself for a public singer, as readily as let my wife be one.’”

1778.

SHERIDAN AFTER MARRIAGE.

Mrs. Sheridan was anxious to secure an income by her vocal powers; and she earnestly entreated her husband to relax from his opposition, so far as to allow of her occasional performance, until their circumstances should render it unnecessary. But he still continued inflexible, though it was with great difficulty he could raise the necessary supplies for the ordinary purposes of life, and that by very equivocal means. One of his resources was that of writing for the fugitive publications of the day, in which he was materially assisted

by his wife ; and many years after his entrance into the sphere of politics, he has been heard to say, that “if he had stuck to the law, he believed he should have done as much as his friend, Tom Erskine ; but,” continued he, “I had no time for such studies. Mrs. Sheridan and myself were often obliged to keep writing for our daily leg or shoulder of mutton, otherwise we should have had no dinner.” One of his friends, to whom he confessed this, wittily replied, “Then, I perceive, it was a *joint concern*.”

1774.

SHERIDAN'S SPELLING.

In a letter addressed this year to a correspondent in *Woodfall's General Advertiser*, it is amusing to observe, that, while he severely criticises his style and language, his own spelling, in every second line, convicts him of deficiency in at least one common branch of literary acquirement :—we find *thing* always

spelt *think*! — *whether*, *where*, and *which*, turned into *wether*, *were*, and *wich*;—and double *m*'s and *s*'s almost invariably reduced to “single blessedness.” This sign of a neglected education remained with him to a very late period, and, in his hasty writing, or scribbling, would occasionally recur, to the last.

1775.

AFFECTING ANECDOTE OF SHERIDAN.

Sheridan's father (on what ground it does not clearly appear) had broken off all intercourse with him. During the run of the *Rivals*, having received information from an old family servant that his father (who still refused to have any intercourse with him) meant to attend, with his daughters, at the representation of the piece, Sheridan took up his station by one of the side scenes, opposite to the box where they sat, and there continued, unobserved, to look at them during the greater part of the night. On his return home, he was so affected by the various

recollections that came upon him, that he burst into tears, and, being questioned as to the cause of his agitation by Mrs. Sheridan, to whom it was new to see him returning thus saddened from the scene of his triumph, he owned how deeply it had gone to his heart, "to think that there sat his father and his sisters before him, and yet that he alone was not permitted to go near them or speak to them." *

1775.

ALTERATIONS IN THE DUENNA AND REJECTED
FRAGMENTS OF ITS WIT.

The character of Carlos was originally meant to be a Jew, and is called "Cousin Moses" by

* On the first performance of the Rivals, it had nearly failed through accident, not the imperfections of the piece. A Mr. Lee, who personated Sir Lucius O' Trigger, mangled and misunderstood the character so much as to excite general disgust; but the public opinion was much changed when a Mr. Clinch had that character allotted to him. In fact, Sheridan considered himself so much indebted to the latter actor, that he presented him with the afterpiece of St. Patrick's Day, for his benefit.

Isaac, in the first sketch of the dialogue; but, possibly, from the consideration that this would apply too personally to Leoni, a Jew, who performed the part, its designation was altered. The scene in the second act, where Carlos is introduced by Isaac to the Duenna, was in dialogue between Isaac and Moses.

But the greater part of the humour of Moses was transferred to the character of Isaac, and a few of the points are still retained by him.

In the speech of Lopez, the servant, with which the opera opens, there are, in the original copy, some humorous points, which appear to have fallen under the pruning knife, but which are not unworthy of being gathered up—

“A plague on these haughty damsels, say I:—when they play their airs on their whining gallants, they ought to consider that we are the chief sufferers,—we have all their ill-humours at second-hand. Donna Louisa’s cruelty to my master usually converts itself into blows by the time it gets to me:—she can frown me black and blue at any time, and I shall carry the marks of the last box on the ear she gave me to my grave. Nay, if she smiles on

any one else, I am the sufferer for it :—if she says a civil word to a rival, I am a rogue and a scoundrel ; and, if she sends him a letter, my back is sure to pay the postage.

In the scene between Ferdinand and Jerome (Act ii. scene 3,) the following lively speech of the latter is left out :—

Ferdin. but he has never sullied his honour, which, with his title, has outlived his means.

“ *Jerome.* Have they? More shame for them ! —What business have honour or titles to survive, when property is extinct? Nobility is but as a helpmate to a good fortune, and, like a Japanese wife, should perish on the funeral pile of the estate !”

In the first act, too, (scene 3,) where Jerome abuses the Duenna, there is an equally unaccountable omission of a sentence, in which he compares the old lady’s face to “parchment, on which Time and Deformity have engrossed their titles.”

1775.

SUPPRESSED SONG IN THE DUENNA.

The following beautiful song, written for the Duenna, is not only omitted in the opera, as printed in the British Theatre, but is still more strangely omitted in the late edition of Sheridan's works :—

“ Ah, cruel maid, how hast thou chang'd
The temper of my mind !
My heart, by thee from love estrang'd,
Becomes, like thee, unkind.

By fortune favour'd, clear in fame,
I once ambitious was ;
And friends I had who fann'd the flame,
And gave my youth applause.

But now my weakness all accuse,
Yet vain their taunts on me ;
Friends, fortune, fame itself I'd lose,
To gain one smile from thee.

And only thou should'st not despise
My weakness or my woe ;
If I am mad in others' eyes,
'Tis thou hast made me so.

But days, like this, with doubting curst,
I will not long endure—
Am I disdain'd—I know the worst,
And likewise know my cure.
If false, her vows she dare renounce,
That instant ends my pain ;
For, oh ! the heart must break at once,
That cannot hate again."

"It is impossible," says Mr. Moore, "to believe that such verses as these had no deeper inspiration than the imaginary loves of an opera. They bear, burnt into every line, the marks of personal feeling, and must have been thrown off in one of those passionate moods of the heart, with which the poet's own youthful love had made him acquainted, and under the impression or vivid recollection of which these lines were written."

1775.

ANACREONTIC VERSES, BY SHERIDAN.

"I ne'er could any lustre see,
In eyes that would not look on me :

When a glance aversion hints,
I always think the lady squints.
I ne'er saw nectar on a lip,
But where my own did hope to sip.
No pearly teeth rejoice my view,
Unless a 'yes' displays their hue—
The prudish lip, that *noes* me back,
Convinces me the teeth are black.
To me the cheek displays no roses,
Like that th' assenting blush discloses ;
But when with proud disdain 'tis spread,
To me 'tis but a scurvy red.
Would she have me praise her hair?
Let her place my garland there.
Is her hand so white and pure?
I must press it to be sure ;
Nor can I be certain then,
Till it grateful press again.
Must I praise her melody?
Let her sing of love and me.
If she choose another theme,
I'd rather hear a peacock scream.
Must I with attentive eye,
Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
I will do so, when I see
That heaving bosom sigh for me.
None but bigots will in vain
Adore a heaven they cannot gain.

If I must religious prove
To the mighty God of Love,
Sure I am it is but fair
He, at least, should hear my prayer.
But, by each joy of his I've known,
And all I yet shall make my own,
Never will I, with humble speech,
Pray to a heav'n I cannot reach."

1777.

ORIGIN OF SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE'S POETRY, IN
"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

The following verses, some of which were afterwards used by Sir B. Backbite, appear to have been written with the intention of ridiculing some women of fashion :—

" Then, behind, all my hair is done up in a plat,
And so, like a cornet's, tuck'd under my hat.
Then I mount on my palfrey as gay as a lark,
And, follow'd by John, take the dust * in High Park.
In the way I am met by some smart macaroni,
Who rides by my side on a little bay poney—

* This phrase is made use of in the dialogue :—" As Lady Betty Curricke was taking the dust in Hyde Park."

No sturdy Hibernian, with shoulders so wide,
But as taper and slim as the poneys they ride ;
Their legs are as slim, and their shoulders no wider,
Dear sweet little creatures, both pony and rider !

But sometimes, when hotter, I order my chaise,
And manage, myself, my two little greys.
Sure never were seen two such sweet little poneys !
Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies :
And to give them this title, I'm sure isn't wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.
In Kensington Gardens to stroll up and down,
You know was the fashion before you left town :—
The thing's well enough, when allowance is made
For the size of the trees and the depth of the shade,
But the spread of their leaves such a shelter affords
To those noisy, impertinent creatures call'd birds,
Whose ridiculous chirruping ruins the scene,
Brings the country before me, and gives me the
spleen.

Yet, tho' 'tis too rural—to come near the mark,
We all herd in *one* walk, and that nearest the Park,
There with ease we may see, as we pass by the wicket,
The chimneys of Knightsbridge, and—footmen at
cricket.

I must tho' in justice, declare that the grass,
Which worn by our feet, is diminish'd apace,
In a little time more will be brown and as flat
As the sand at Vauxhall, or as Ranelagh mat.

Improving thus fast, perhaps, by degrees,
We may see rolls and butter spread under the trees,
With a small pretty band in each seat of the walk,
To play little tunes and enliven our talk."

1777.

SHERIDAN'S HABITS OF ELABORATE FINISHING
IN HIS COMPOSITIONS.

It was the fate of Mr. Sheridan, through life, —and, in a great degree, his policy,—to gain credit for excessive indolence and carelessness; while few persons, with so much natural brilliancy of talents, ever employed more art and circumspection in their display. This was the case, remarkably, in the instance of the "School for Scandal." Notwithstanding the labour which he bestowed upon this comedy, (or we should rather, perhaps, say in consequence of that labour) the first representation of the piece was announced before the whole of the copy was in the hands of the actors. The manuscript, indeed, of the five last scenes bears evident marks of this haste in finishing,—there being but one

rough draught of them, scribbled upon detached pieces of paper ; while, of all the preceding acts, there are numerous transcripts, scattered promiscuously through six or seven books, with new interlineations and memorandums to each. On the last leaf of all, which exists just as we may suppose it to have been despatched by him to the copyist, there is the following curious specimen of doxology, written hastily, in the hand-writing of the respective parties, at the bottom :—

“ Finished at last, Thank God !

“ R. B. SHERIDAN.”

“ Amen !

“ W. HOPKINS.”*

1777.

SHERIDAN AND CUMBERLAND.

When the “ School for Scandal” came out, Cumberland’s children prevailed upon their father to take them to see it ;—they had the stage-box—their father was seated behind them ;

* The Prompter.

and as the story was told by a gentleman, a friend of Sheridan's, who was close by, every time the children laughed at what was going on on the stage, he pinched them, and said, "What are you laughing at, my dear little folks? you should not laugh, my angels; there is nothing to laugh at;"—and then, in an under tone, "keep still, you little dunces."

Sheridan having been told of this long afterwards, said, "It was very ungrateful in Cumberland to have been displeased with his poor children for laughing at *my comedy*; for I went the other night to see *his tragedy*,* and laughed at it from beginning to end."

1779.

SHERIDAN'S RAPIDITY OF COMPOSITION.—

THE CRITIC.

Two days previous to the performance of "The Critic," the last scene was not written: Dr. Ford and Mr. Linley, the joint proprietors,

* *The Carmelite*, it is presumed, is the tragedy here referred to.

began to get nervous and uneasy, and the actors were absolutely *au désespoir*, especially King, who was not only stage-manager, but had to play Puff. To him was assigned the duty of hunting down and worrying Sheridan about the last scene; day after day passed, until the last day but two arrived, and still it did not make its appearance.

At last, Mr. Linley, who, being his father-in-law, was pretty well aware of his habits, hit upon a stratagem. A night rehearsal of "The Critic" was ordered, and Sheridan, having dined with Linley, was prevailed upon to go. While they were on the stage, King whispered Sheridan that he had something particular to communicate, and begged he would step into the second green room. Accordingly, Sheridan went, and there found a table, with pens, ink, and paper, a good fire, an armed chair at the table, and two bottles of claret, with a dish of anchovy sandwiches. The moment he got into the room, King stepped out, and locked the

door ; immediately after which Linley and Ford came up and told the author that, until he had written the scene, he would be kept where he was.

Sheridan took this decided measure in good part : he ate the anchovies, finished the claret, wrote the scene, and laughed heartily at the ingenuity of the contrivance.

1773.

EPILOGUE BY SHERIDAN.

We must not, says Mr. Moore, forget a lively Epilogue which he wrote this year, for Miss Hannah More's tragedy of " Fatal Falsehood," in which there is a description of a blue-stocking lady, executed with all his happiest point. Of this dense, epigrammatic style, in which every line is a cartridge of wit in itself, Sheridan was, both in prose and verse, a consummate master ; and if any one could hope to succeed after Pope, in a mock epic, founded

upon fashionable life, it would have been, we should think, the writer of this epilogue :—

“ What motley cares Corilla’s mind perplex,
Whom maids and metaphors conspire to vex !
In studious deshabelle behold her sit,
A letter’d gossip and a housewife wit :
At once invoking, though for different views,
Her gods, her cook, her milliner, and muse.
Round her strew’d room a frippery chaos lies,
A chequer’d wreck of notable and wise.
Bills, books, caps, couplets, combs, a varied mass,
Oppress the toilet and obscure the glass ;
Unfinish’d here an epigram is laid,
And there a mantua-maker’s bill unpaid.
There new-born plays foretaste the town’s applause,
There dormant patterns pine for future gauze.
A moral essay now is all her care,
A satire next, and then a bill of fare.
A scene she now projects, and now a dish ;
Here, Act the First ; and here, ‘ Remove with
Fish.’
Now, while this eye in a fine frenzy rolls,
That soberly casts up a bill for coals ;
Black pins and daggers in one leaf she sticks,
And tears, and threads, and bowls, and thimbles
mix.”

1779.

SHERIDAN'S INTRODUCTION TO FOX.

About this year Sheridan and Fox were introduced to each other, for the first time, by Lord John Townshend. The following is the account given by his lordship of that memorable interview :—" I made the first dinner-party at which they met ; having told Fox that all the notions he might have conceived of Sheridan's talents and genius from the comedy of *The Rivals*, &c. would fall infinitely short of the admiration of his astonishing powers, which I was sure he would entertain at the first interview. The first interview between them (there were very few present, only Tickell and myself, and one or two more,) I shall never forget. Fox told me, after breaking up from dinner, that he had always thought Hare, after my uncle, Charles Townshend, the wittiest man he ever met with, but that Sheridan surpassed them both infinitely ; and Sheridan told me next

day that he was quite lost in admiration of Fox, and that it was a puzzle to him to say what he admired most, his commanding superiority of talents and universal knowledge, or his playful fancy, artless manners, and benevolence of heart, which showed itself in every word he uttered."

1779.

SHERIDAN'S FORESTERS.

Sheridan had commenced, before this period, a drama, under this title, of which he was always accustomed to speak with fondness. Long afterwards, when he was asked whether he had altogether ceased to write for the stage, or was afraid of public recollection of the "School for Scandal," he used to reply, "Wait till I produce my *Foresters*." The following tender and graceful lines are not unworthy of the hand that produced *The Duenna* :—

" We two, each other's only pride,
Each other's bliss, each other's guide,
Far from the world's unhallow'd noise,
Its coarse delights and tainted joys,

Through wilds will roam and deserts rude—
For, Love, thy home is solitude.

“ There shall no vain pretender be,
To court thy smile and torture me,
No proud superior there be seen,
But Nature’s voice shall hail thee, queen.

“ With fond respect and tender awe,
I will receive thy gentle law,
Obey thy looks, and serve thee still,
Prevent thy wish, foresee thy will,
And, added to a lover’s care,
Be all that friends and parents are.”

1779.

SHERIDAN’S PROJECTED COMEDY.

About this time, Sheridan had planned a comedy, the subject of which was to be *Affectation* in all its shapes. It does not appear that he had written any part of the dialogue; but the following specimens of the plans and portions of the dialogue, will at once remind every reader of the author of “The School for Scandal”:—

“ A man intriguing, only for the reputation of it
—to his confidential servant: ‘ Who am I in love

with now?'—'The newspapers give you so and so—you are laying close siege to Lady L. in the Morning Post, and have succeeded with Lady G. in The Herald—Sir F. is very jealous of you in The Gazetteer.'—'Remember to-morrow, the first thing you do, to put me in love with Mrs. C.'

"'I forgot to forget the billet-doux at Brooks's.—'By the bye, an't I in love with you?'—'Lady L. has promised to meet me in her carriage to-morrow—where is the most public place?'

"'You were rude to her!'—'Oh no, upon my soul, I made love to her directly.'

"An old man, who affects intrigue, and writes his own reproaches in the Morning Post, trying to scandalize himself into the reputation of being young, as if he could obscure his age by blotting his character—though never so little candid as when he's abusing himself.

"'Shall you be at Lady ——'s?—I'm told the Bramin is to be there, and the new French philosopher.'—'No—it will be pleasanter at Lady ——'s conversazione—the cow with two heads will be there.'

"'I shall order my valet to shoot me the very first thing he does in the morning.'

"A fat woman trundling into a room on castors,—

in sitting can only lean against her chair—rings on her fingers, and her fat arms strangled with bracelets, which belt them like corded brawn—rolling and heaving, when she laughs, with the rattles in her throat, and a most apoplectic ogle—you wish to draw her out as you would an opera-glass.

“The loadstone of true beauty draws the heaviest substances—not like the fat dowager, who frets herself into warmth to get the notice of a few *papier mâché* fops, as you rub Dutch sealing-wax to draw paper.

“A lady who affects poetry.—‘I made regular approaches to her by sonnets and rebusses—a rondeau of circumvallation—her pride sapped by an elegy, and her reserve surprised by an impromptu—proceeding to storm with Pindarics, she, at last saved the further effusion of ink by a capitulation.

“*Lady Clio*. ‘What am I reading?—have I drawn nothing lately?—is the work-bag finished?—how accomplished I am!—has the man been to untune the harpsichord?—does it look as if I had been playing on it?’

“‘Shall I be ill to-day?—shall I be nervous?’ ‘Your La’ship was nervous yesterday.’—‘Was I?—then I’ll have a cold—I haven’t had a cold this fortnight—a cold is becoming—no I’ll not have a

cough ; that's fatiguing—I'll be quite well.'—' You become sickness—your La'ship always looks vastly well when you're ill.'

“ ‘Leave the book half read and the rose half finished—you know I love to be caught in the fact.’

1779.

EPILOGUES BY SHERIDAN.

Some fragments of an Epilogue written by Sheridan about this time, and apparently intended to be spoken in the character of a woman of fashion, give a lively notion of what the poem would have been when complete. The high carriages, that had just then come into fashion, are thus adverted to :—

“ My carriage stared at !—none so high or fine—
 Palmér's mail-coach shall be a sledge to mine.

* * * * *

No longer now the youths beside us stand,
 And talking lean, and leaning press the hand ;
 But, ogling upward, as aloft we sit,
 Straining, poor things, their ancles and their wit,
 And, much too short the inside to explore,
 Hang like supporters half way up the door.”

The approach of a "veteran husband," to disturb these flirtations and chase away the lovers, is then hinted at :

" To persecuted virtue yield assistance,
And for one hour teach younger men their distance;
Make them, in very spite, appear discreet,
And mar the public mysteries of the street."

The affectation of appearing to make love, while talking on indifferent matters, is illustrated by the following simile :

" So when dramatic statesmen talk apart,
With practis'd gesture and heroic start,
The plot's their theme, the gaping galleries guess,
While Hull and Fearon think of nothing less."

The following lines seem to belong to the same Epilogue :

" The Campus Martius of St. James's Street,
Where the beau cavalry pace to and fro,
Before they take the field in Rotten Row ;
Where Brooks's Blues and Weltze's Light Dragoons
Dismount in files, and ogle in platoons." *

* As a specimen of Sheridan's "repetitions of himself," it may here be remarked that this humorous image is still more humorously applied in his farce of *St. Patrick's Day*, in which one of the soldiers advises the corps to "argue in platoons."

He had also begun another Epilogue, directed against female gamesters, of which he himself repeated a couplet or two to Mr. Rogers, a short time before his death, and of which there remain some few scattered traces among his papers :

“ A night of fretful passion may consume,
All that thou hast of beauty’s gentle bloom,
And one distemper’d hour of sordid fear
Print on thy brow the wrinkles of a year.

• • • • •

Great figure loses, little figure wins.

• • • • •

Ungrateful blushes and disorder’d sighs,
Which love disclaims nor even shame supplies.

• • • • •

Gay smiles, which once belong’d to mirth alone,
And starting tears, which pity dares not own.”

1780.

SHERIDAN’S FIRST SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT.

Sheridan in this year came into Parliament, and made his first speech on the 20th of November, when a petition was presented to

the House, complaining of the undue election of the sitting members (himself and Mr. Monckton) for Stafford. It was rather lucky for him that the occasion was one in which he felt personally interested, as it took away much of that appearance of anxiety for display, which might have attended his first exhibition upon any general subject. The fame, however, which he had already acquired by his literary talents, was sufficient, even on this question, to awaken all the curiosity and expectation of his audience ; and accordingly we are told in the report of his speech, that “ he was heard with particular attention, the House being uncommonly still while he was speaking.” The indignation, which he expressed on this occasion at the charges brought by the petition against the electors of Stafford, was coolly turned into ridicule by Mr. Rigby, Paymaster of the Forces. But Mr. Fox, whose eloquence was always ready at the call of good nature, and, like the shield of Ajax, had “ ample room and

verge enough," to protect not only himself but his friends, came promptly to the aid of the young orator; and, in reply to Mr. Rigby, observed, that "though those ministerial members, who chiefly robbed and plundered their constituents, might afterwards affect to despise them, yet gentlemen who felt properly the nature of the trust allotted to them, would always treat them and speak of them with respect."

It was on this night, as Woodfall used to relate, that Mr. Sheridan, after he had spoken, came up to him in the gallery, and asked, with much anxiety, what he thought of his first attempt. The answer of Woodfall, as he had the courage afterwards to own, was "I am sorry to say I do not think that this is your line—you had much better have stuck to your former pursuits." On hearing which, Sheridan rested his head upon his hand for a few minutes, and then vehemently exclaimed, "It

is in me, however, and, by G—, it shall come out.”

It appears, indeed, that upon many persons besides Mr. Woodfall, the impression produced by this first essay of his oratory, was far from answerable to the expectations that had been formed. The chief defect remarked in him was a thick and indistinct mode of delivery, which, though he afterwards greatly corrected it, was never entirely removed. It is not a little amusing to find him in one of his early speeches, gravely rebuking Mr. Rigby and Mr. Courtenay for the levity and raillery with which they treated the subject before the House,—thus condemning the use of that weapon in other hands, which soon after became so formidable in his own.

This character of the first efforts of Sheridan in Parliament, is confirmed by the Margravine of Anspach:—“Sheridan’s talents,” says she, “which might, perhaps, be considered as superior to those of most of his contemporaries from the

variety of his acquirements, did not at first engage the attention of the House of Commons so much as might be expected. Although, on his first appearance in political life, he displayed the greatest talents as a speaker, yet he met with many impediments to prevent his progress. Mr. Pitt opposed him in his first attempt; but he soon began to triumph by wit and argument."

1781.

SHERIDAN'S ROBINSON CRUSOE.

Among other occasional trifles of this kind, to which Sheridan condescended for the advantage of Drury Lane Theatre, of which he was proprietor, was the pantomime of Robinson Crusoe, of which he is understood to have been the author. There was a practical joke in this pantomime (where, in pulling off a man's boot, the leg was pulled off with it,) which the famous Delpini laid claim to as his own, and publicly complained of Sheridan's having stolen it from him. Sheridan said it was claimed as literary property, being "in usum Delpini."

An instance of his readiness and rapidity when he chose to exert himself, occurred at this time. He happened to call at the Theatre one day, while the pantomime was in rehearsal, and found them in the greatest confusion, not knowing what to introduce to give time for the setting of a scene. It was suggested to Mr. Sheridan that a song would afford sufficient opportunity to the carpenters for their preparation; accordingly he sat down at the prompter's table, on the stage, and wrote on the back of a play-bill the beautiful ballad of "The Midnight Watch," which was set to music by his father-in-law, Mr. Linley, in a style which has established its reputation as one of the most beautiful specimens of pure English melody.

1783.

SHERIDAN AND THE INDIA BILL.

Mr. Sheridan seems to have spoken but once during the discussions on the India Bill, and that was on the third reading, when it was

carried so triumphantly through the House of Commons. The report of his speech is introduced with the usual tantalizing epithets, "witty," "entertaining," &c. &c.; but, as usual, entails disappointment in the perusal. There is only one of the announced pleasantries forthcoming, in any shape, through the speech. Mr. Scott (the present Lord Eldon) had, in the course of the debate, indulged in a licence of Scriptural parody, which he would himself, no doubt, be among the first to stigmatise as blasphemy in others, and had affected to discover the rudiments of the India Bill in a chapter of the book of Revelations,—Babylon being the East India Company, Mr. Fox and his seven commissioners the Beast with the seven heads, and the marks on the hand and forehead, imprinted by the Beast upon those around him, meaning, evidently, he said, the peerages, pensions, and places distributed by the minister. In answering this strange sally of forensic wit, Mr. Sheridan quoted other pas-

sages from the same Sacred Book, which (as the reporter gravely assures us) “told strongly for the Bill,” and which proved that Lord Fitzwilliam and his fellow commissioners, instead of being the seven heads of the Beast, were seven angels “clothed in pure and white linen !”

1783.

SHERIDAN'S RETORT UPON PITT.

During the debate on the Preliminary articles of Peace he produced that happy retort upon Mr. Pitt, which, for good-humoured point and seasonableness, has seldom, if ever, been equalled.

“Mr. Pitt” (say the Parliamentary Reports) “was pointedly severe on the gentlemen who had spoken against the Address, and particularly on Mr. Sheridan. ‘No man admired more than he did the abilities of that Right Honourable Gentlemen, the elegant sallies of his thought, the gay effusions of his fancy, his dramatic turns and his epigrammatic point ; and if they were reserved for the proper stage, they would, no doubt, receive what the

Honourable Gentleman's abilities always did receive the plaudits of the audience ; and it would be his fortune '*sui plausu gaudere theatri.*' But this was not the proper scene for the exhibition of those elegancies.' Mr. Sheridan, in rising to explain, said, that 'On the particular sort of personality which the Right Honourable Gentleman had thought proper to make use of, he need not make any comment. The propriety, the taste, the gentlemanly point of it, must have been obvious to the House. But,' said Mr. Sheridan, 'let me assure the Right Honourable Gentleman, that I do now, and will, at any time he chooses to repeat this sort of allusion, meet it with the most sincere good-humour. Nay, I will say more—flattered and encouraged by the Right Honourable Gentleman's panegyric on my talents, if ever I again engage in the compositions he alludes to, I may be tempted to an act of presumption—to attempt an improvement on one of Ben Jonson's best characters, the character of the Angry Boy in the Alchemist.'"

1783.

SHERIDAN'S JEU D'ESPRIT ON THE FOREGOING
OCCURRENCE.

" ADVERTISEMENT EXTRAORDINARY.

" We hear that, in consequence of a hint, lately given in the House of Commons, the Play of the

Alchemist is certainly to be performed by a set of Gentlemen for our diversion, in a private apartment of Buckingham-house.

“ The Characters, thus described in the old editions of Ben Jonson, are to be represented in the following manner—the old practice of men’s playing the female parts being adopted : —

“ SUBTLE (<i>the Alchemist</i>)	-	Lord Sh—lb—e.
FACE (<i>the House-keeper</i>)		The Lord Ch—ll—r.
DOLL COMMON (<i>their Col-</i>		
league)	- - -	The L—d Adv—c—te
DRUGGER (<i>a Tobacco-man</i>)		Lord Eff—ng—m.
EPICURE MAMMON	-	Mr. R—gby.
TRIBULATION	- -	Dr. J—nk—s—n.
ANANIAS (<i>a little Pastor</i>)		Mr. H—ll.
KASTRIL (<i>the Angry Boy</i>)		Mr. W. P—tt.
DAME PLIANT	- -	Gen. C—nw—y.
	and	
SURLY	- - -	His ————.”

1784.

SHERIDAN’S PARLIAMENTARY HUMOUR.

In a Committee of Ways and Means, the proposed tax upon horses came under consideration, upon which, Lord Surrey, afterwards Duke of Norfolk, suggested as an improve-

ment, a tax upon winning horses, as well as upon those that should start for the plate. Mr. Pitt instantly caught the idea, and adopted it, in addition to his own proposition, and not by way of a substitute; upon which Mr. Sheridan rose, and after some witty remarks, said that the right honourable gentleman had proved that a light rider had the best chance of winning the match, since he had left the noble lord behind him. This contrast between the thin and spare form of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the jolly rotundity of his lordship, produced full effect, and elicited a general laugh; after which, the orator proceeded to assure his noble friend, that when he returned to the sporting gentlemen who would be affected by this new impost, instead of admiring him for his spirit, they would most probably exclaim, very feelingly,

“Jocky of Norfolk, be not too bold.”

In the same sportive vein of good-humour, his lordship said he was happy to find the

knowing ones had been taken in during this heat, and that he thought the right honourable gentleman had distanced him, and fairly won the plate.

After some other pleasantries of a like kind, the minister said he believed this was the first time that so dull a business as a Committee of Ways and Means was ever concluded with such a lively epilogue as that of Sheridan, to whom, as well as to Lord Surrey, he sincerely desired to return his thanks for the assistance he had derived from their experience.

1785.

When the India Bill of Mr. Pitt was brought up from the Committee, and read on the 26th of July, Mr. Sheridan observed that twenty-one new clauses were added, which were to be known by the letters of the alphabet from A to W ; therefore, he hoped that some gentlemen of ability would invent three more for X, Y, and Z, to complete the alphabet,

which would then render the bill a perfect hornbook for the use of the minister and the instruction of rising politicians.

On the ninth of February, Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor first acquired the appellation of Chicken, by saying that he always delivered his legal opinion in that house and else where with great humility, because he was young, and might, with propriety, call himself a *chicken in the profession of the law*. Sheridan, in a humorous desultory speech which produced repeated peals of laughter, took notice of the diffidence of Mr. Taylor, as connected with another observation of the same gentleman, "that he should then vote with opposition because they were in the right, but that in all probability he should never vote with them again;" thus presaging that for the future they would be always in the wrong. "If such be his augury," observed Sheridan, "I cannot help looking upon this chicken as a bird of ill omen, and wish that he had con-

tinued side by side with the full grown cock (alluding to Bearcroft), who will, no doubt, long continue to feed about the gates of the Treasury, to pick up those crumbs which are there plentifully scattered about, to keep the chickens and full grown fowls together."

When Pitt proposed the tax on female servants, Sheridan declared that it could be considered in no other light than as a bounty to bachelors, and a penalty upon propagation.

1786.

MR. SHERIDAN'S OPINION OF PITT'S SINKING
FUND.

Though, from the prosperous state of the revenue at the time of the institution of the Fund, the absurdity was not yet committed of borrowing money to maintain it, we may perceive by the following acute pleasantry of Mr. Sheridan, (who denied the existence of the alleged surplus of income,) that he already had a keen insight into the fallacy of that Plan of Redemption after-

wards followed:—"At present," he said, "it was clear there was no surplus; and the only means which suggested themselves to him were, a loan of a million for the especial purpose—for the Right Hon. Gentleman might say, with the person in the comedy, '*If you won't lend me the money, how can I pay you?*'"

1787.

SHERIDAN'S FAMOUS SPEECH ON THE HASTING'S
CAUSE.

On the 7th of February, Mr. Sheridan made his famous speech, in this famous cause. When he ended, loud applause (in that assembly an unusual mode of expressing admiration) followed: and when it subsided, a motion was made for an adjournment, that the members might have time to collect their scattered senses, for the exercise of a sober judgment; they being then, to use the words of Mr. Pitt, "under the wand of the enchanter."

Mr. Burke declared this celebrated speech to

be "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit, united, of which there was any record or tradition." Mr. Fox said, "All that he had ever heard,—all that he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapour before the sun." Mr. Pitt acknowledged "that it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient and modern times; and possessed every thing that genius or art could furnish to agitate and control the human mind."*

* The following anecdote is given as a proof of the irresistible power of this speech in a note upon Mr. Bisset's History of the Reign of George III.:—

"The late Mr. Logan, well known for his literary efforts, and author of a most masterly defence of Mr. Hastings, went that day to the House of Commons, prepossessed for the accused and against the accuser. At the expiration of the first hour, he said to a friend, 'All this is declamatory assertion without proof:—when the second was finished, 'This is a most wonderful oration:—at the close of the third, 'Mr. Hastings has acted very unjustifiably:—the fourth, 'Mr. Hastings is a most atrocious criminal;—and, at last, 'Of all monsters of iniquity the most enormous is Warren Hastings!' "

Of this splendid oration there exists no faithful report — but even from the skeleton of it which is preserved, we imagine the grandeur of its living proportions, as the fossil bones which are sometimes found, enable us to form some idea of the gigantic remains of a former world.

Some specimens of a speech that called forth such eulogies from such men, however, we shall here give. Adverting to some of those admirers of Mr. Hastings, who were not so implicit in their partiality, as to give unqualified applause to his crimes, but found an excuse for their atrocity in the greatness of his mind, he thus proceeds:—

“ To estimate the solidity of such a defence, it would be sufficient merely to consider in what consisted this prepossessing distinction, this captivating characteristic of greatness of mind. Is it not solely to be traced in great actions directed to great ends? In them, and them alone, we are to search for true estimable magnanimity. To them only, can we justly affix the splendid title and honours of real greatness. There was, indeed, another species of greatness, which displayed itself in boldly conceiv-

ing a bad measure, and undauntedly pursuing it to its accomplishment. But had Mr. Hastings the merit of exhibiting either of these descriptions of greatness—even of the latter? He saw nothing great—nothing magnanimous—nothing open—nothing direct in his measures, or in his mind. On the contrary, he had too often pursued the worst objects by the worst means. His course was an eternal deviation from rectitude. He either tyrannised or deceived; and was by turns a Dionysius and a Scapin. As well might the writhing obliquity of the serpent be compared to the swift directness of the arrow, as the duplicity of Mr. Hasting's ambition to the simple steadiness of genuine magnanimity. In his mind all was shuffling, ambiguous, dark, insidious, and little: nothing simple, nothing unmixed: all affected plainness, and actual dissimulation;—a heterogeneous mass of contradictory qualities; with nothing great but his crimes; and even those contrasted by the littleness of his motives, which at once denoted both his baseness and his meanness, and marked him for a traitor and a trickster. Nay, in his style and writing there was the same mixture of vicious contrarieties;—the most grovelling ideas were conveyed in the most inflated language, giving mock consequence to low cavils, and uttering quibbles in heroics; so that his compositions disgusted the mind's taste, as much as his actions excited the soul's abhorrence. Indeed, this mixture of character

seemed by some unaccountable but inherent quality, to be appropriated, though in inferior degrees, to every thing that concerned his employers. He remembered to have heard an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Dundas) remark, that there was something in the first frame and constitution of the Company, which extended the sordid principles of their origin over all their successive operations; connecting with their civil policy, and even with their boldest achievements, the meanness of a pedlar and the profligacy of pirates. Alike in the political and the military line, could be observed *auctioneering ambassadors*, and *trading generals*;—and thus we saw a revolution brought about by *affidavits*; an army employed in *executing an arrest*; a town besieged on *a note of hand*; a prince dethroned for the *balance of an account*. Thus it was, they exhibited a government, which united the mock majesty of a bloody sceptre, and the little *traffic of a merchant's counting-house*, wielding a truncheon with one hand, and *picking a pocket with the other*."

On the fourth day of the oration he rose into his most ambitious flights, and produced some of those dazzling bursts of declamation, of which the traditional fame is most vividly preserved. Among the audience of that day was Gibbon, and the mention of his name in the following

passage not only produced its effect at the time, but, as connected with literary anecdote, will make the passage itself long memorable. Politics are of the day, but literature is of all time—and, though it was in the power of the orator, in his brief moment of triumph, to throw a lustre over the historian by a passing epithet,* the name of the latter will, at the long run, pay back the honour with interest. Having reprobated the violence and perfidy of the Governor-general, in forcing the Nabob to plunder his own relatives and friends, he adds :

“ I do say, that if you search the history of the world, you will not find an act of tyranny and fraud to surpass this ; if you read all past histories, peruse

* Gibbon himself thought it an event worthy of record in his *Memoirs*. “ Before my departure from England,” he says, “ I was present at the august spectacle of Mr. Hastings’s Trial in Westminster Hall. It is not my province to absolve or condemn the Governor of India ; but Mr. Sheridan’s eloquence demanded my applause ; nor could I hear without emotion the personal compliment which he paid me in the presence of the British nation. From this display of genius, which blazed four successive days,” &c. &c.

the Annals of Tacitus; read the luminous page of Gibbon, and all the ancient or modern writers that have searched into the depravity of former ages, to draw a lesson for the present, you will not find an act of treacherous, deliberate, cool, cruelty that could exceed this."

1787.

SHERIDAN'S JOKE AGAINST GIBBON.

On being asked by some honest brother Whig, at the conclusion of the speech, how he came to compliment Gibbon with the epithet "luminous," Sheridan answered, in a half whisper, "I said 'roluminous.'"

1788.

THE HASTINGS CAUSE.—MRS. SHERIDAN'S INTERESTING AND CORDIAL LETTER.

The speech of Mr. Sheridan in Westminster Hall, though so much inferior, in the opinion of Mr. Fox and others, to that which he had delivered on the same subject in the House of Commons, seems to have produced, at the time, even a more lively and general sensation.

"I have delayed writing," says Mrs. She-

ridan, in a letter to her sister-in-law, dated four days after the termination of the speech, "till I could gratify myself and you by sending you the news of *our* dear Dick's triumph—of *our* triumph I may call it; for, surely, no one, in the slightest degree connected with him, but must feel proud and happy. It is impossible, *my* dear woman, to convey to you the delight, the astonishment, the adoration, he has excited in the breasts of every class of people! Every party-prejudice has been overcome by a display of genius, eloquence, and goodness, which no one, with any thing like a heart about them, could have listened to, without being the wiser, and the better for the rest of their lives. What must *my* feelings be!—you only can imagine. To tell you the truth, it is with some difficulty that I can 'let down my mind,' as Mr. Burke said afterwards, to talk or think on any other subject. But pleasure, too exquisite, becomes pain, and I am at this moment suffering for the delightful anxieties of last week."

This letter of Mrs. Sheridan thus proceeds :
—“ You were perhaps alarmed by the accounts of S.’s illness in the papers ; but I have the pleasure to assure you he is now perfectly well, and I hope by next week we shall be quietly settled in the country, and suffered to repose, in every sense of the word ; for indeed we have, both of us, been in a constant state of agitation, of one kind or another, for some time back.

“ I am very glad to hear your father continues so well. Surely he must feel happy and proud of such a son. I take it for granted you see the newspapers : I assure you the accounts in them are not exaggerated, and only echo the exclamation of admiration that is in every body’s mouth. I make no excuse for dwelling on this subject : I know you will not find it tedious. God bless you !—I am an invalid at present and not able to write long letters.”

1788.

SHERIDAN'S THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT.

Sheridan undertook the office of accepting or rejecting the new plays offered to Drury-Lane ; but had neither leisure nor inclination to attend to it. Melancholy proofs of this appeared in piles of long forgotten tragedies and comedies, which he had promised to consider, and had never opened. "Mr. Kemble," says Mr. Boaden, "whom I one day found sitting very patiently in this great man's library, pointed to this *funeral* pile, and added to his action the declaration of his belief, that in these morning attendances, he had read more of these productions than ever had been, or would be read by the proprietor himself.

"Sheridan's habit was to keep his visitors distributed variously, according to their rank or intimacy with him. Some, like ourselves, penetrated into the library ; others tired the chairs in the parlours ; and the tradesmen lost their time in the hall, the butler's room, and other scenical

divisions of the premises. A door opening above stairs, moved all the hopes below : but when he came down, his hair was drest for the day, and his countenance for the occasion; and so cordial were his manners, his glance so masterly, and his address so captivating, that the people, for the most part, seemed to forget what they actually wanted, and went away as if they had come only to look at him."

1788.

SHERIDAN'S *BON MOT* ADDRESSED TO PALMER.

The return of Palmer the actor again to Drury Lane was a subject of infinite importance, in a theatrical point of view, both to himself and Sheridan. The meeting between these men of *address* was, therefore, expected to produce something remarkable. Palmer made quite a scene of it. After his profound bow, he approached the author of *The School for Scandal*, with an air of penitent humility; his head declined, the whites of his eyes turned upwards, his hands

clasped together, and his whole air exactly that of *Joseph Surface* before Sir Peter Teazle. He began thus :—

“ My dear Mr. Sheridan, if you could but know what I feel at this moment—*HERE (laying one hand upon his heart,)*

Sheridan, with inimitable readiness, stopped him :

“ Why, JACK ! you forget *I wrote it.*

• Palmer, in telling the story himself, added, that the manager’s wit cost him something ; “ for,” said he, “ I made him add *THREE* pounds per week to the salary I had before my *desertion.*”

1788.

SHERIDAN’S READINESS OF COMPOSITION.

Mr. Sheridan, in this year, published “ A Comparative Statement of the two Bills for the better Government of the British Possessions in India, brought into Parliament by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt ; with Explanatory Observations. By R. B. Sheridan, Esq. 4to, 1s. 6d. Debrett and Beckett.”

This little work, recommended especially to the public by the author's name, contained a most acute investigation of that complicated and important subject. With respect to Fox's Bill, Mr. Sheridan asserted, in the address to his pamphlet, that there never was a legislative measure so little examined, so generally misunderstood, and so confidently misrepresented. It is a curious fact, that this production was actually written in the House of Commons during the debate on the question itself; and this, because Sheridan himself said, that he felt it as a most teasing circumstance to hear gentlemen of the most respectable abilities, day after day, arguing upon, and drawing parallels between, the provisions of the two bills, upon which, it was perfectly obvious, they had not condescended to bestow any very minute degree of attention. Conceiving it, therefore, to be no very difficult task, to reduce the discussion to a plain and concise statement of facts, he undertook the pamphlet.

1788.

SHERIDAN'S *BON MOT* ON DUNDAS.

In the debate on the India Control Bill, 5th March, 1788, Sheridan said, " he remembered that the India Board had been compared to seven doctors and eight apothecaries administering to the health of one poor patient ; but their prescriptions were more palatable than the dose now mixing by the learned Doctor of Control, (Dundas,) who, in the true spirit of quackery, desires his patient to take it,—that he has no occasion to confine himself at home, but may safely go about his business as usual. This sovereign remedy," he said, " would, no doubt, soon be advertised, under the popular name of '*Scots pills for all sorts of Oriental disorders.*' "

1789-90.

SHERIDAN IN PRIVATE LIFE.

Though pecuniary embarrassment, as appears from his papers, had already begun to weave its

fatal net around him, there was, as yet, little more than sufficed to give exercise to his ingenuity, and the resources of the Drury-Lane treasury were still in full nightly flow. The charms by which his home was embellished were such as few other homes could boast ; and, if any thing made it less happy than it ought to be, the cause was to be found in the very brilliancy of his life and attractions, and in those triumphs out of the sphere of domestic love, to which his vanity, perhaps, oftener than his feelings, impelled him.

Among his own immediate associates, the gaiety of his spirits amounted almost to boyishness. He delighted in all sorts of dramatic tricks and disguises, and the lively parties with which his country-house was always filled, were kept in momentary expectation of some new device for their mystification or amusement. It was not unusual to despatch a man and horse seven or eight miles, for a piece of crape or a mask, or some other such trifle for these frolics.

Sheridan's friend Richardson, was remark-

ble for his love of disputation ; and Tickell, when hard pressed by him in argument, used often, as a last resource, to assume the voice and manner of Mr. Fox, which he had the power of mimicking so exactly, that Richardson confessed he sometimes stood awed and silenced by the resemblance.

This disputatious humour of Richardson was once turned to account by Sheridan, in a very characteristic manner. Having had a hackney-coach in employ for five or six hours, and not being provided with the means of paying it, he happened to espy Richardson in the street, and proposed to take him in the coach some part of his way. The offer being accepted, Sheridan lost no time in starting a subject of conversation, on which he knew his companion was sure to become argumentative and animated. Having, by well-managed contradiction, brought him to the proper pitch of excitement, he affected to grow impatient and angry himself, and saying that "he could not think of staying in the same coach with a person that

would use such language," pulled the check-string, and desired the coachman to let him out. Richardson, wholly occupied with the argument, and regarding the retreat of his opponent as an acknowledgment of defeat, still pressed his point, and even shouted, "more last words" through the coach-window after Sheridan, who, walking quietly home, left the poor disputant responsible for the heavy fare of the coach.

Between Tickell and Sheridan there was a never-ending "skirmish of wit," both verbal and practical; and the latter kind, in particular, was carried on between them with all the waggery, and, not unfrequently, the malice of school-boys.

On one occasion, Sheridan having covered the floor of a dark passage, leading from the drawing-room, with all the plates and dishes of the house, ranged closely together, provoked his unconscious play-fellow to pursue him into the midst of them. Having left a path for his own escape, he passed through easily, but Tic-

kell, falling at full length into the ambuscade, was very much cut in several places. The next day, Lord John Townshend, on paying a visit to the bed-side of Tickell, found him covered over with patches, and indignantly vowing vengeance against Sheridan for this unjustifiable trick. In the midst of his anger, however, he could not help exclaiming, with the true feeling of an amateur of this sort of mischief, " But how amazingly well done it was !"

1790.

SHERIDAN'S POLITICAL PASQUINADES.

The following series of pasquinades, so well known in political circles, and written, as the reader will perceive, at different dates, though principally by Sheridan, owes some of its stanzas to his friend Tickell, and a few others to Lord John Townshend.

" Johnny W—lks, Johnny W—lks,
Thou greatest of bilks,

How chang'd are the notes you now sing
Your fam'd Forty-five
Is Prerogative,
And your blasphemy, ' God save the King,'
Johnny W—lks,
And your blasphemy, ' God save the King.' ”

“ Jack Ch—ch—ll, Jack Ch—ch—ll,
The town sure you search ill,
Your mob has disgraced all your brags ;
When next you draw out
Your hospital rout,
Do, prithee, afford them clean rags,
Jack Ch—ch—ll,
Do, prithee, afford them clean rags.”

“ Captain K—th, Captain K—th,
Keep your tongue 'twixt your teeth,
Lest bed-chamber tricks you betray ;
And if teeth you want more,
Why my bold Commodore,—
You may borrow of Lord G—ll—y,
Captain K—th,
You may borrow of Lord G—ll—y.”

“ Joe M—wb—y, Joe M—wb—y,
Your throat sure must raw be,
In striving to make yourself heard ;

But it pleased not the pigs,
Nor the Westminster Whigs,
That your Knighthood should utter one word,
Joe M—wb—y,
That your Knighthood should utter one word."

“ M—ntm—res, M—ntm—res,
Whom nobody for is,
And *for* whom we none of us care ;
From Dublin you came—
It had been much the same
If your Lordship had staid where you were,
M—ntm—res,
If your Lordship had staid where you were.”

“ Lord O—gl—y, Lord O—gl—y,
 You spoke mighty strongly—
 Who you *are*, tho' all people admire !
 But I'll let you depart,
 For I believe in my heart,
 You had rather they did not inquire,
Lord O—gl—y
 You had rather they did not inquire.”

“ Gl—nb—e, Gl—nb—e,
What’s good for the scurvy ?
For ne’er be your old trade forgot—
In your arms rather quarter
A pestle and mortar,

" Dull H—l—y, dull H—l—y,
 Your auditors feel ye
 A speaker of very great weight;
 And they wish you were dumb,
 When, with ponderous hum,
 You lengthen the drowsy debate,
 Dull H—l—y,
 You lengthen the drowsy debate."

There are about as many more of these stanzas, written at different intervals, according as new victims, with good names for rhyming, presented themselves,—the metre being a most tempting medium for such lampoons. There is, indeed, appended to one of Sheridan's copies of them, a long list, (like a Tablet of Proscription), containing about fifteen other names marked out for the same fate; and it will be seen by the following specimen that some of them had a very narrow escape :—

" Will C—rt—s"

" V—ns—t—t, V—ns—t—t,—for little thou fit art."

" Will D—nd—s, Will D—nd—s,—were you only an ass."

"L—ghb—h,—thorough."

"Sam H—rsal—y, Sam H—rsal—y, . . . coarsely."

"P—ttym—n, P—ttym—n,—speak truth if you
can."

1790.

SHERIDAN'S LOVE OF PRACTICAL JESTS.

The Rev. Mr. O'Beirne (afterwards Bishop of Meath) having arrived to dinner at Sheridan's country-house near Osterley, where, as usual, a gay party was collected, (consisting of General Burgoyne, Mrs. Crewe, Tickell, &c.) it was proposed that on the next day (Sunday) the Rev. Gentleman should, on gaining the consent of the resident clergyman, give a specimen of his talents as a preacher, in the village church. On his objecting that he was not provided with a sermon, his host offered to write one for him, if he would consent to preach it; and, the offer being accepted, Sheridan left the company early, and did not return for the remainder of the evening. The following morning, Mr. O'Beirne found the manuscript by his

bed-side, tied together neatly (as he described it) with riband ;—the subject of the discourse being the “ Abuse of Riches.” Having read it over, and corrected some theological errors, (such as “ it is easier for a camel, *as Moses says,*” &c.) he delivered the sermon in his most impressive style, much to the delight of his own party, and to the satisfaction, as he unsuspectingly flattered himself, of all the rest of the congregation, among whom was Mr. Sheridan’s wealthy neighbour, Mr. C.

Some months afterwards, however, Mr. O’Beirne perceived that the family of Mr. C——, with whom he had previously been intimate, treated him with marked coldness ; and, on his expressing some innocent wonder at the circumstance, was at length informed, to his dismay, by General Burgoyne, that the sermon which Sheridan had written for him was, throughout, a personal attack upon Mr. C——, who had at that time rendered himself very unpopular in the neighbourhood by some harsh conduct to

the poor, and to whom every one in the church, except the unconscious preacher, applied almost every sentence of the sermon. .

1792.

SHERIDAN AND THE PANTHEON.

On the 14th of January, 1792, the Pantheon theatre was burned. "Mr. Sheridan," says Kelly, "was with me on that day; I went with him into Oxford Street to view the conflagration. While Mr. Sheridan was observing how very high the flames were, he said, 'Is it possible to extinguish the flames?' An Irish fireman close to us, and who heard him make the observation, said, 'For the love of Heaven, Mr. Sheridan, don't make yourself uneasy, Sir; by the Powers, it will soon be down; sure enough, they won't have another drop of water in five minutes.' Pat said this in the natural warmth of his heart, for he imagined that the burning of the Pantheon theatre must have been gratifying to Mr. Sheridan, as the proprietor of Drury-Lane."

1792.

SHERIDAN'S HONOURABLE CONDUCT.

“A part of Mr. Sheridan's conduct relative to the Opera company at the Pantheon,” says Kelly,* “I was witness to, and thought it reflected great credit on him. The noble directors of that theatre wished to get a patent for Italian operas at the Pantheon;—they opened it in the year 1791 with a splendid serious comic opera, and grand ballets; but they found the stage so contracted, that it was hardly possible to produce any thing like spectacle.

At the back of the Pantheon stage there was a large piece of ground, which went as far back as Marlborough Street, which, with a house adjoining it, belonged to a Mr. Thompson. The noble directors of the Pantheon offered to give a large sum for the purchase of the ground,

* In his *Reminiscences*, lately published; a work which, independent of its other attractions, contains more characteristic anecdotes of Sheridan than all the other books about him put together.

which would have enabled them to increase their stage.

Mr. Thompson, whose property it was, had been an old and faithful servant in Dublin, to Mr. Thomas Sheridan, the father of Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan ; and, when Mr. Sheridan was in office, during Mr. Fox's administration, he procured Thompson a place in one of the public offices, and also made him stage property-man of Drury-Lane theatre. The Duke of Bedford wrote a letter, which I have seen, to Mr Sheridan, to request of him to compel Thompson to sell the piece of ground they wanted, without which they could not have an efficient stage. Sheridan replied to his Grace, (the letter was sent from my house,) ' that he was sorry he could not grant his request, as the carrying on Italian operas at the Pantheon was most unjust and unfair towards the claimants on the Opera House in the Haymarket, as well as to Mr. Taylor, the chief proprietor, who was making every effort to rebuild it ; and that, so far from

aiding it, he would do every thing in his power to counteract it.' He immediately saw Thompson, and made a point with him not to accept of any proposals from the Pantheon, which Thompson conceded, and so ended the business."

1792.

SHERIDAN'S WAYS AND MEANS.

At one time, when hard pressed to pay the Opera orchestra, who were greatly in arrear, and who had resolved not to perform unless their debt was liquidated, threatening to make an application to the Lord Chamberlain; Mr. Sheridan was roused to make an effort, to raise five hundred pounds, which was the immediate sum required. He found a person ready to make an advance for three months, with a proviso, that Stephen Storace and myself, who then managed the Opera, should give our joint security for the repayment. Being both of us eager that the concern should not stop, we did so, and he promised faithfully to provide for it. The very day

the bill became due, Storace was with me, in the morning ; we were both in *modo penseroso*, wondering how we could contrive to get it renewed ; when, to our great surprise, Mr. Sheridan entered, laughing, with our acceptance dangling between his fingers, the sight of which changed our *modo penseroso* to an *allegor vivace* ; he put our security into my hands, at which my heart did verily rejoice, and with all sincerity I made use of the quotation,

“ For this relief, much thanks.”

I mention this to show, however general the impression of Mr. Sheridan’s want of punctuality in money matters may be, that there is no rule without an exception.

1792.

SHERIDAN AND HIS WIFE.

’To say that, with all her beauty and talents, she was not happy, nor escaped the censure of the world, is but to assign to her that share of shadow, without which nothing bright

ever existed on this earth. United not only in marriage, but by love, to a man who was the object of universal admiration, and whose vanity and passions too often led him to yield to the temptations by which he was surrounded, it was but natural that, in the consciousness of her own power to charm, she should be now and then piqued into an appearance of retaliation ; and seem to listen with complacency to some of those numerous worshippers, who crowd around such beautiful and unguarded shrines. Not that she was at any time unwatched by Sheridan ;—on the contrary he followed her with a lover's eyes throughout ; and it was believed of both, by those who knew them best, that, even when they seemed most attracted by other objects, they would willingly, had they consulted the real wishes of their hearts, have given up every one in the world for each other.

They had, immediately after their marriage, as we have seen, passed some time in a little cottage at East Burnham, and it was a period,

of course, long remembered by them both for its happiness. I have been told by a friend of Sheridan, that he once overheard him exclaiming to himself, after looking for some moments at his wife, with a pang, no doubt, of self-reproach,—“ Could any thing bring back those melancholy first feelings ?” then adding, with a sigh, “ Yes, perhaps the cottage at East Burnham might.”

DEATH OF MRS. SHERIDAN—SHERIDAN’S
FEELINGS.

[Extracts from a letter written by a friend of Mrs.
Sheridan.]

“ July 19, 1792.

“ Our dear departed friend kept her bed only two days, and seemed to suffer less during that interval than for some time before. She was perfectly in her senses to the last moment, and talked with the greatest composure of her approaching dissolution ; assuring us all that she had the most perfect confidence in the mercies of an all-powerful and merciful Being, from whom alone she could have derived the inward comfort and support she felt at that

awful moment! She said she had no fear of death; and that all her concern arose from the thoughts of leaving so many dear and tender ties, and of what they would suffer from her loss. Her own family were at Bath, and had spent one day with her, when she was tolerably well. Your poor brother now thought it proper to send for them, and to flatter them no longer. They immediately came:—it was the morning before she died. They were introduced one at a time to her bed-side, and were prepared as much as possible for this sad scene. The women bore it very well, but all our feelings were awakened for her poor father. The interview between him and the dear angel, was afflicting and heart-breaking to the greatest degree imaginable. I was afraid she would have sunk under the cruel agitation:—she said it was indeed too much for her. She gave some kind injunction to each of them, and said every thing she could to comfort them under this severe trial. They then parted, in the hope of seeing her again in the evening, but they

never saw her more ! Mr. Sheridan and I sat up all that night with her ;—indeed he had done so for several nights before, and never left her one moment that could be avoided. About four o'clock in the morning we perceived an alarming change, and sent for her physician.* She said.

* This physician was Dr. Bain, then a very young man, whose friendship with Sheridan began by this mournful duty to his wife, and only ended with the performance of the same melancholy office for himself. As the writer of the above letters was not present during the interview which she describes between him and Mrs. Sheridan, there are a few slight errors in her account of what passed, the particulars of which, as related by Dr. Bain himself, are as follows :—On his arrival, she begged of Sheridan and her female friend to leave the room, and then, desiring him to lock the door after them, said, “ You have never deceived me :—tell me truly, shall I live over this night.” Dr. Bain immediately felt her pulse, and, finding that she was dying, answered, “ I recommend you to take some laudanum ;” upon which she replied, “ I understand you :—then give it me.”

Dr. Bain fully concurs with the writer of these letters, in bearing testimony to the tenderness and affection that Sheridan evinced on this occasion :—it was, he says, quite “ the devotedness of a lover.” The following note, addressed to him after the sad event was over, does honour alike to the writer and the receiver :—

“ My

to him, 'If you can relieve me, do it quickly ;— if not, do not let me struggle, but give me some laudanum.' His answer was, 'then I will give you some laudanum.' She desired to see Tom and Betty Tickell before she took it, of whom she took a most affecting leave ! Your brother behaved most wonderfully, though his heart was breaking ; and, at times, his feelings were so violent, that I feared he would have been quite ungovernable at the last. Yet he summoned up courage to kneel by the bedside, till he felt the last pulse of expiring excellence, and then withdrew. She died at five o'clock in the morning, 28th of June.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I must request your acceptance of the inclosed for your professional attendance. For the kind and friendly attentions which have accompanied your efforts, I must remain your debtor. The recollection of them will live in my mind with the memory of the dear lost object, whose sufferings you soothed, and whose heart was grateful for it.

" Believe me,

" Dear Sir,

" Very sincerely yours,

" Friday night.

R. B. SHERIDAN

“ I hope, my dear Mrs. Lefanu, you will excuse my dwelling on this most agonizing scene. I have a melancholy pleasure in so doing, and fancy it will not be disagreeable to you to hear all the particulars of an event so interesting, so afflicting, to all who knew the beloved creature ! For my part, I never beheld such a scene—never suffered such a conflict—much as I have suffered on my own account. While I live, the remembrance of it, and the dear lost object, can never be effaced from my mind.*

FROM THE SAME LADY TO SHERIDAN'S SISTER.

“ To return to your brother, he talks of having his house here immediately furnished and made ready for the reception of his nursery. It is a very good sort of common

* The following striking reflection, in Sheridan's hand-writing, was suggested, no doubt, by his feelings on this occasion :—

“ The loss of the breath from a beloved object, long suffering in pain and certainty to die, is not so great a privation as the last loss of her beautiful remains. The victory of the grave is sharper than the sting of death.”

house, with an excellent garden, roomy, and fit for the purpose, but will admit of no show or expense. I understand he has taken a house in Jermyn Street, where he may see company, but he does not intend having any other country-house but this. Isleworth he gives up, his time being expired there. I believe he has got a private tutor for Tom*—somebody very much to his mind. At one time he talked of sending him abroad with this gentleman, but I know not at present what his determinations are. He is too fond of Tom's society to let him go from him for any time; but I think it would be more to his advantage if he would consent to part with him for two or three years. It is impossible for any man to be more devotedly attached to his children than he is, and I hope they will be a comfort and a blessing to him, when the world loses its charms. The last time

* His son.

I saw him, which was for about five minutes, I thought he looked remarkably well, and seemed tolerably cheerful. But I have observed, in general, that this affliction has made a wonderful alteration in the expression of his countenance and in his manners.* The Leighs and my family, spent a week with him at Isleworth the beginning of August, where we were indeed most affectionately and hospitably entertained. I could hardly believe him to be the same man. In fact, we never saw him do the honours of his house before; *that*, you know, he always left to the dear, elegant creature, who never failed to please and charm every one who came within the sphere of her notice. Nobody could have filled her place so well;—he seemed to have pleasure in making much of those whom she loved, and who, he knew, sincerely loved her. We all thought he

* Mr. Moore says, he has heard a noble friend of Sheridan say, that, happening about this time to sleep in the room next to him, he could plainly hear him sobbing throughout the greater part of the night.

never appeared to such advantage. He was attentive to every body and every thing, though grave and thoughtful; and his feelings, poor fellow, often ready to break forth in spite of his efforts to suppress them. He spent his evenings mostly by himself. He desired me, when I wrote, to let you know that she had by will made a little distribution of what she called 'her own property,' and had left you and your sister rings of remembrance, and her *fausse montre*, containing Mr. Sheridan's picture, to you,—Mrs. Joseph Lefanu having got hers. She left rings also to Mr. and Mrs. Leigh, my sister, daughter, and myself, and positively forbids any others being given on any pretence, but these I have specified—evidently precluding all her *fine friends* from this last mark of her esteem and approbation. She had, poor thing, with some justice, turned from them all in disgust, and, I observed, during her illness, never mentioned any of them with regard or kindness.

DEATH OF SHERIDAN'S DAUGHTER.

The consolation which Sheridan derived from his little daughter was not long spared to him. In a letter, without a date, from the same amiable writer, the following account of her death is given :—

“The circumstances attending this melancholy event were particularly distressing. A large party of young people were assembled at your brother's to spend a joyous evening in dancing. We were all in the height of our merriment,—he himself remarkably cheerful, and partaking of the amusement, when the alarm was given, that the dear little angel was dying! It is impossible to describe the confusion and horror of the scene;—he was quite frantic, and I knew not what to do. Happily there were present several kind, good-natured men, who had their recollection, and pointed out what should be done. We very soon had every possible assistance, and for a short time we

had some hope that her precious life would have been spared to us—but that was soon at an end !

“ The dear babe never throve to my satisfaction : she was small and delicate beyond imagination, and gave very little expectation of long life ; but she had visibly declined during the last month. * * * Mr. Sheridan made himself very miserable at first, from an apprehension that she had been neglected or mismanaged ; but I trust he is perfectly convinced that this was not the case. He was severely afflicted at first. The dear babe’s resemblance to her mother after her death was so much more striking, that it was impossible to see her without recalling every circumstance of that afflicting scene, and he was continually in the room indulging the sad remembrance. In this manner he indulged his feelings for four or five days ; then, having indispensable business, he was obliged to go to London, from whence he returned, on Sunday, apparently in good spirits and as well as usual. But, however he

may assume the appearance of ease or cheerfulness, his heart is not of a nature to be quickly reconciled to the loss of any thing he loves. He suffers deeply and secretly ; and I dare say he will long and bitterly lament both mother and child."

1792.

SHERIDAN'S GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

"I never beheld," says Kelly, "more poignant grief than Mr. Sheridan felt for the loss of his beloved wife ; and although the world, which knew him only as a public man, will perhaps scarcely credit the fact, I have seen him, night after night, sit and cry like a child, while I sang to him, at his desire, a pathetic little song of my composition, "They bore her to her grassy grave."

1792.

SHERIDAN'S HOAX ON MADAME DE GENLIS.

We copy the following romantic story from the recently published and very interesting Me-

moirs of this celebrated lady. The parties alluded to, are the writer herself; Mademoiselle d'Orleans, her pupil; and Pamela, her adopted daughter. " We set out on our return to France, on the 20th October, 1792, but such an extraordinary incident occurred, that I cannot pass it over in silence, though I shall merely relate the facts without explanation, or the addition of any reflections of my own; as the impartial reader can make them for himself. We set out at ten in the morning, in two carriages, the one with six, the other with four horses, carrying our waiting-maids. Two months before, I had sent back to Paris four servants, so that we had only one French domestic left, and another who was hired to go with us as far as Dover; and we had not gone a mile from London, when our French servant, who had only travelled once from Dover to London, thought we were not in the right road, and when he mentioned it, I saw he was correct. When the postilions were questioned, they answered, 'that they had been desir-

ous of avoiding a steep hill, and that they would soon reach the high road.' In three quarters of an hour, we saw that we were travelling through a part of the country we were quite ignorant of, and I again asked the reason of it from the servant and the drivers, when they again assured me that we were about to regain the common road ; yet they continued along this road with uncommon speed, and, as I remarked that the drivers and the servant answered my questions with singular briefness, and seemed particularly afraid of stopping, we began to look round us with a feeling of astonishment and anxiety ; we asked them more questions, and this time they told us 'that we had lost our way, but they were desirous of concealing it from us, till they came up to a certain cross-road that led to Dartford, where we were to change horses ; and that we had already been an hour and a half in this road, and were not more than two miles from Dartford.' We thought it very singular that they could have lost their way on such a road

as that from London to Dover; but our belief that we were only two miles from Dartford drove away the vague fears, that had alarmed us for a moment; an hour, however, elapsed, and when we saw that no post-house appeared, our anxiety rose in a moment to absolute terror, and, while thus perplexed, a singular and extraordinary incident completed our alarm, for two well-dressed men passed by us on foot, and cried out very distinctly, in French, "*Ladies, they are deceiving you—they are not taking you to Dover.*" In the position we were in, the effect produced by these alarming words may be easily conceived. We found several ways of explaining this singular fact, but they are too voluminous to be mentioned here, and I shall merely state the results. I had much difficulty in making the drivers stop at a village on our right, for in spite of my cries they drove on. However, the French servant (the other said nothing) forced them to stop at last. I then inquired at the village how far we were from Dartford, and

my surprise may be conceived, when I was informed that we were 22 miles from it! I kept my suspicions to myself, took a guide from the village, and declared that I would return immediately to London, as I found that I was nearer to it than Dartford. The drivers strongly opposed this resolution, and were very insolent; but our French servant, aided by the guide, forced them to obey; but as the drivers were unwilling, and the horses worn out, we did not reach London till dark,—when I made them drive to Mr. Sheridan's immediately, and that gentleman was greatly surprised at seeing me again. I told him what had happened, and, like us, he thought it quite impossible that it could have sprung from chance; he sent for an officer to take charge of the servants, who were detained under the pretext of paying their bill. They waited patiently, but the hired footman soon disappeared. The drivers were examined before a justice, in the presence of witnesses; and, after much hesitation and denial,

they admitted that *a gentleman*, whom they did not know, had come that morning to their master's, had taken them to an ale-house, and had persuaded them to take the road we had travelled, by giving them plenty to drink. They were examined very minutely, but no further information could be obtained. Mr. Sheridan told me that enough was proved to send them to trial; but that it would be a tedious and expensive business. The drivers were discharged, and we pushed the matter no further, as he received some anonymous letters on the subject that alarmed him. When Mr. Sheridan saw the fright I was in, at the mere idea of setting out again for Dover, he promised to accompany us, but, he added, that pressing business would prevent him setting out till a few days after, and he took us to the country-house I have already mentioned at Isleworth, near Richmond, on the banks of the Thames."

"It is impossible to read this narrative," says Mr. Moore, "with the recollection, at the same

time, in our minds, of the boyish propensity of Sheridan to what are called practical jokes, without strongly suspecting that he was himself the contriver of the whole adventure. The ready attendance of the Justice,—the “unknown gentleman” deposed to by the post-boys,—the disappearance of the *laquais* and the advice given by Sheridan that the affair should be pursued no further,—all strongly savour of dramatic contrivance, and must have afforded a scene not a little trying to the gravity of him who took the trouble of getting it up. With respect to his motive, the agreeable month at his country-house sufficiently explains it; nor could his conscience have felt much scruples about an imposture, which, so far from being attended with any disagreeable consequences, furnished the lady with an incident of romance, of which she was but too happy to avail herself, and procured for him the presence of such a distinguished party, to grace and enliven the festivities of Isleworth.”

1793.

SHERIDAN'S LOVE OF BETTING.

Of the events of the private life of Mr. Sheridan, during the stormy part of his political career, there remain but few memorials among his papers. As an illustration, however, of his love of betting—the only sort of gambling in which he ever indulged—the following curious list of his wagers for this year is not unamusing :

“*25th May, 1793.*—Mr. Sheridan bets Gen. Fitzpatrick one hundred guineas to fifty guineas, that within two years from this date, some measure is adopted in Parliament which shall be (*bonâ fide*) considered as the adoption of a Parliamentary Reform.”

“*29th January, 1793.*—Mr. S. bets Mr. Boothby Clopton five hundred guineas, that there is a Reform in the Representation of the people of England within three years from the date hereof.”

“*29th January, 1793.*—Mr. S. bets Mr. Hardy one hundred guineas to fifty guineas, that Mr. W. Windham does not represent Norwich at the next general election.”

“29th January, 1793.—Mr. S. bets Gen. Fitzpatrick fifty guineas, that a corps of British troops are sent to Holland within two months of the date hereof.”

“18th March, 1793.—Mr. S. bets Lord Titchfield two hundred guineas, that the D. of Portland is at the head of an Administration on or before the 18th of March, 1796: Mr. Fox to decide whether any place the Duke may then fill shall *bonâ fide* come within the meaning of this bet.”

“25th March, 1793.—Mr. S. bets Mr. Hardy one hundred guineas, that the Three per cent. Consols are as high this day twelvemonth as at the date hereof.”

“Mr. S. bets Gen. Tarleton one hundred guineas to fifty guineas, that Mr. Pitt is first Lord of the Treasury on the 28th of May, 1795.—Mr. S. bets Mr. St. A. St. John fifteen guineas to five guineas, ditto.—Mr. S. bets Lord Sefton one hundred and forty guineas to forty guineas, ditto.”

“19th March, 1793.—Lord Titchfield and Lord W. Russell bet Mr. S. three hundred guineas to two hundred guineas, that Mr. Pitt is first Lord of the Treasury on the 19th of March, 1795.”

“18th March, 1793.—Lord Titchfield bets Mr. S.

twenty-five guineas to fifty guineas, that Mr. W. Windham represents Norwich at the next general election."

1793.

SHERIDAN'S IDEAS OF LORD ——'S POWERS OF
HUMOUR.

Lord * *, who, among his many excellent qualities, does not include a very lively sense of humour, having exclaimed, upon hearing some good anecdote from Sheridan, "I'll go and tell that to our friend * *," Sheridan called him back instantly and said, with much gravity, "For God's sake, don't, my dear * *: a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter."

1793.

SHERIDAN'S MOTTO FOR THE SUN NEWSPAPER.

In the speech on the existence of seditious practices in the country, he gave the well-known and happy turn to the motto of the Sun newspaper, which was at that time known to be the organ of the alarmists. "There was one

paper," he remarked, "in particular, said to be the property of members of that House, and published and conducted under their immediate direction, which had for its motto a garbled part of a beautiful sentence, when it might, with much more propriety, have assumed the whole—

“ ‘Solem quis dicere falsum
Audeat ? Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudemque et operta tumescere bella.’ ”

1793.

SHERIDAN'S SPEECH ON THE SEDITIOUS PRACTICES.

In the same speech there is some lively ridicule thrown upon the panic then prevalent : “ The alarm had been brought forward in great pomp and form on Saturday morning. At night all the mail-coaches were stopped ; the Duke of Richmond stationed himself, among other curiosities, at the Tower ; a great municipal officer, too, had made a discovery exceedingly beneficial to the people of this country. He meant the Lord Mayor of London, who

had found out that there was at the King's Arms in Cornhill a Debating Society, where principles of the most dangerous tendency were propagated ; where people went to buy treason at sixpence a head ; where it was retailed to them by the glimmering of an inch of candle : and five minutes to be measured by the glass, were allowed to each traitor to perform his part in overturning the State."

1793.

SHERIDAN'S OBJECTION TO THE INTRODUCTION
OF POLITICS INTO THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT.

" On the 24th of January, 1793," says Kelly, " there was not any play performed, from respect to the memory of the unfortunate monarch, Louis the Sixteenth, who was murdered in Paris on that day. Mr. Kemble, without consulting Mr. Sheridan, closed the Theatre. Mr. Sheridan, who was out of town, arrived late that evening, and finding there was no play, came to my house in Suffolk-Street, accompanied by the

present Earl Grey, and was highly incensed at the shutting up of the theatre upon such an occasion ; for, he said, it was an invariable maxim with him, that neither politics nor religion should ever be taken notice of in his play-house ; though, I believe, no man deplored the tragical event more sincerely than he did."

1793.

SHERIDAN'S POWER OF RAISING MONEY.

" Mr. Sheridan," says Kelly, " appointed Stephen Storace and myself joint directors of the Italian Opera, with a *carte blanche* ; but he was proprietor, and of course consulted on all important points ; and whose advice on theatricals, or any thing else, indeed, was so good, when he chose to give it ? Amongst other things, he desired that the boxes should be newly decorated, and the seats in the pit and gallery covered with new cloth.

" One day, when I returned from a late rehearsal to a hurried dinner, having to return to the

Theatre to act in 'Cymon,' I saw a man waiting in the passage of my house in Suffolk-Street, with patterns of different coloured cloth, that I might select one wherewith to cover the seats of the Theatre. In a great hurry, I examined them, and chose one; the sequel will prove, that it would have been better for me had I professed myself no judge of upholstery.

"In the summer of the same year I was arrested by a sheriff's officer, who informed me that he had a writ against me for 350*l.*; I, at the time, not owing a sixpence to any living creature.

I said he must be mistaken in his man. He showed me the writ, which was at the suit of a Mr. Henderson, an upholsterer in Coventry Street, and the debt, he said, had been incurred, for furnishing the Opera House with covering for the boxes, pit, &c. &c.

"I sent my servant to London by the mail, with an account of the transaction to Mr. Sheridan, who immediately settled the debt in his own peculiar way. He sent for Henderson the

upholsterer, to his house, and, after describing the heinous cruelty he had committed, by arresting a man who had nothing to do with the debt, and who was on a professional engagement in the country, expatiated and remonstrated, explained and extenuated, until he worked so much upon the upholsterer, that in less than half an hour he agreed to exonerate me and my bail; taking, instead of such security, Mr. Sheridan's bond; which, I must say, was extremely correct in the upholsterer. But Mr. Sheridan never did things by halves; and therefore, before the said upholsterer quitted the room, he contrived to borrow 200*l.* of him, in addition to the original claim, and he departed thinking himself highly honoured by Mr. Sheridan's condescension in accepting the loan.

“I have seen many instances of Mr. Sheridan's power of raising money when pushed hard; and one among the rest, I confess, even astonished *me*. He was once 3000*l.* in arrear with the performers of the Italian Opera: payment was

put off from day to day, and they bore the repeated postponements with Christian patience ; but, at last, even their docility revolted ; and finding all the tales of Hope flattering, they met, and resolved not to perform any longer until they were paid. As manager, I accordingly received on the Saturday morning their written declaration, that not one of them would appear at night. On getting this, I went to Messrs. Morland's banking-house, in Pall Mall, to request some advances, in order to satisfy the performers for the moment ; but, alas ! my appeal was vain, and the bankers were inexorable ;—they, like the singers, were worn out, and assured me, with a solemn oath, that they would not advance another shilling either to Mr. Sheridan or the concern, for that they were already too deep in arrear themselves.

“ This was a pozer ; and with a heart rather sad I went to Hertford Street, Mayfair, to Mr. Sheridan, who at that time had not risen. Having sent him up word of the urgency of my

business, after keeping me waiting rather more than two hours in the greatest anxiety, he came out of his bed-room. I told him unless he could raise 3000*l.* the theatre must be shut up, and he, and all belonging to the establishment, be disgraced.

“ ‘Three thousand pounds, Kelly ! there is no such sum in nature, said he, with all the coolness imaginable, nay, more than I could have imagined a man, under such circumstances, capable of. ‘Are you an admirer of Shakspeare ?’

“ ‘To be sure I am,’ said I ; ‘but what has Shakspeare to do with 3000*l.* or the Italian singers ?’

“ ‘There is one passage in Shakspeare,’ said he, ‘which I have always admired particularly ; and it is that where Falstaff says, ‘Master Robert Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds.’ — ‘Yes, Sir John,’ says Shallow, ‘which I beg you will let me take home with me.’— ‘That

may not so easy be, Master Robert Shallow,' replies Falstaff; and so say I unto thee, Master Mick Kelly, to get three thousands pounds may not so easy be.'

“ ‘Then, Sir,’ said I, ‘there is no alternative but closing the Opera House;’ and not quite pleased with his apparent carelessness, I was leaving the room, when he bade me stop, ring the bell, and order a hackney-coach. He then sat down, and read the newspaper, perfectly at his ease, while I was in an agony of anxiety. When the coach came, he desired me to get into it, and order the coachman to drive to Morland’s, and to Morland’s we went; there he got out, and I remained in the carriage in a state of nervous suspense not to be described; but in less than a quarter of an hour, to my joy and surprise, out he came, with 3000*l.* in Bank notes in his hand. By what hocus-pocus he got it, I never knew, nor can I imagine even at this moment, but certes he brought it to me, out of

the very house where, an hour or two before, the firm had sworn that they would not advance him another sixpence.

“ He saw, by my countenance, the emotions of surprise and pleasure his appearance, so provided, had excited, and, laughing, bid me take the money to the treasurer, but to be sure to keep enough out of it to buy a barrel of native oysters, which he would come and roast at night, at my house in Suffolk Street.”

1794.

SHERIDAN'S INVENTION OF BULLS.

“ On the first night of *Lodoiska*,” says Kelly, “ Mrs. Crouch and I, who performed in it, were nearly killed by the falling of a tower and bridge on the stage. Mr. Sheridan afterwards supped with us, and I told him I was lucky in not having broken my neck. He left us earlier than usual, to go to the Duchess of Devonshire's. The Duchess, who had been at the theatre, asked him if I was much hurt ; to which (with

his usual good nature in making blunders for me) he replied, "Not in the least ; I have just left him very well, and in good spirits ; but he has been putting a very puzzling question to me, which was,—‘ Suppose, Mr. Sheridan, I had been killed by the fall, who would have *maintained me* for the rest of my life ?’ ”

1794.

SHERIDAN'S LIBERALITY.

“ At this period,” says Kelly, “ Mr. Sheridan was getting largely in my debt ; I, myself, was not keeping out of debt, and my wine bills were very large ; the purple tide flowed by day and night ; and I never stopped it.

“ One day, I called upon him, and requested he would let me have a little money ; he put me off, as usual, with promising he would let me have some to-morrow. To-morrow was always his favourite pay-day ; but, like the trust-day at a French inn, that morrow never did I see. In the midst of all this, he told me how

much he was pleased with Tom Welsh, (then a boy,) and his singing, ‘Angels, ever bright and fair,’ the night before. ‘He should be encouraged,’ said he; ‘go and tell him, that, in addition to his salary, I shall send him a present of 200*l.*; and you shall take it to him.’ ‘Shall I?’ said I, (making the quotation from Lionel and Clarissa,) ‘I think the borough may be disposed of to a worthier candidate;’ but neither Welsh nor I ever got a halfpenny of the money.”

1794.

A SHORT PART IN A PLAY.

“When the ‘Glorious first of June’ was produced,” says Kelly, “Storace and myself gave it some new songs; but the music was chiefly old. I had to represent the character of Frederick; and, as I was so much employed in writing the music, I begged Mr. Sheridan (who wrote a good many speeches for it), to make as short a

part for me, and with as little speaking in it as possible. He assured me he would.

“In the scene in which I came on, to sing a song (written by Cobb), ‘When in war on the ocean we meet the proud foe!’ there was a cottage in the distance, at which (the stage direction said) I was to look earnestly, for a moment or two; and the line which I then had to speak was this :

“There stands my Louisa’s cottage; she must be either in it or out of it.”

The song began immediately, and not another word was there in the whole part. This sublime and solitary speech produced a loud laugh from the audience.

“When the piece was over, Mr. Sheridan came into the green-room, and complimented me on my quickness, and being so perfect in the part which he had taken so much pains to write for me; which, he said, considering the short time I had to study it, was truly astonish-

ing. He certainly had the laugh against me, and he did not spare me."

1794.

SHERIDAN'S ADMIRATION OF GARRICK.

It may be worth noticing, that at the desire of Mr. Sheridan, a plank of the old stage, on which Garrick had trod, was preserved from the wreck, and carefully placed in the floor of the new building.

1795.

SHERIDAN AND THE FIFE MAJOR.

Soon after Sheridan's marriage with Miss Ogle, they went on a visit to her father the Dean of Winchester. During their stay at the deanery, a party met there one night, the *lion* of which was a kind of musical genius—the Fife-major of a regiment quartered in the town. With this man's talents and performance on several instruments, Miss Ogle, the elder sister of Mrs. Sheridan was delighted,

and expressed her applause with the vivacity and energy natural to her character. Sheridan's attention was soon attracted towards her. "Look at Susan," cried he, "she is quite in raptures—give me a pencil, and a scrap of paper." In a moment he produced the following impromptu :

By heaven above ! our Sue's in love,
And nothing can assuage her ;
She's formed a plan for that smart man,
I mean that gay fife-major.

But hark again, that merry strain !
Now I'll bet any wager
The overture has made it sure :—
I wish you joy, fife-major !

The father of Miss Ogle, who was, perhaps, somewhat dissatisfied with the choice his daughter had made, replied to the verses in another Stanza ; in which (much to the annoyance of Sheridan) he hinted, that the choice of one daughter was not much less imprudent than that of the other.

1795.

SHERIDAN AND DUNDAS.

Sheridan, in attacking Ministers, observed, "If, as had been stated, that gentlemen would serve their country, without at the same time serving themselves, we certainly had at present a most gentlemanly administration; and one gentleman, Mr. Secretary Dundas, is three times as much a gentleman as any of them, for he has three places."

Upon this attack, Dundas, then very recently married, very gravely assured the House that his situation was not to be envied—that every morning when he got up, and every night when he went to rest, he had a task to perform almost too great for human powers. Sheridan instantly retorted, that he himself would be very happy to relieve Dundas from the fatigues of the *Home* Department!

1796.

SHERIDAN AND DOWTON.

“Mr. Sheridan, whose praise in theatrical matters was fame, often told me,” says Kelly, “that he thought Dowton a sterling actor ; and that if he ever wrote a comedy, the two performers for whom he should take most pains, would be Dowton and Jack Johnstone. 'Would that he had kept his promise !

“Dowton, on one occasion, thought himself slighted, and quitted his situation. Mr. Sheridan was very sorry to lose so excellent an actor, and wrote to him to return, but all in vain. I went down to Mr. Lee's house, at Mr. Sheridan's request, to see what *I* could do, and stopped there two days ; but Dowton was inexorable, although every thing he desired would have been granted.

“When I returned to town, and told Mr. Sheridan of the failure of my mission, he said to me, ‘I compare Dowton to a spoiled

child at school, who first cries for bread and butter—that is given him; when he has got that, he must have brown sugar put upon it—it is sugared for him; after that, he is not contented till he has glass windows cut out upon it.’ However, he returned to his situation, and Sheridan, on the occasion, ordered the revival of two comedies for him, ‘The Goodnatured Man,’ and ‘The Cholerick Man,’ but, (as may be anticipated by those who knew Mr. Sheridan) neither of them was ever revived.”

1796.

SHERIDAN AND THE SHAKSPEARE MSS.

Mr. Ireland,* in his Confessions, says Boaden, has reported that Sheridan was by no means

* A short time before this, Sheridan lived in Bruton Street, and it appears he was in the habit of having private theatrical performances at his house by young folks, before large parties of rank and fashion. On one of those occasions, young Shakspeare Ireland was a performer, being known to Sheridan, through the friendship of old Mr. Ireland with the family of Mr. Linley. Ireland attributes much of his fondness for theatrical pursuits to this circumstance.

an enthusiast as to Shakspeare; yet that, upon reading a few pages of the manuscript he was going to buy, he was struck with some unstrung lines and crude passages, as below the general character of the poet; but, as the inferiority might proceed from his youth, he still relied in the fullest confidence upon the external evidences of paper and ink, and the character of the penmanship.

As to Mr. Kemble all this time, his opinion, though one of the most correct of our Shakspear-ians, was little regarded. He had by no means a mind easy to satisfy on such a question; and very frequently expressed to me his wonder, that Sheridan should have troubled himself so *little* about Shakspeare, when he really was a greater master of Spenser, than any other reader of the present day. I have myself heard him recite passages of great length and beauty; and his fondness for that poet, which began in his youth, originated, I think, in some such accident as that recorded of

Cowley. He had whole cantos of the "Faery Queene" by heart.

1796.

SHERIDAN'S POWERS OF PERSUASION.

The following anecdote adds one more to the proofs of Sheridan's recklessness of involving himself in seeming difficulties, and of his ready power of warding them off when they arrived. When Mr. Sheridan was principal proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre, he was, as will readily be believed, not very punctual in paying the salaries of his performers. On one occasion, he had run so deeply into arrear with the celebrated Mrs. Siddons, that she felt herself under the necessity of signifying to him, that, until they were paid up, she positively would not again appear. Sheridan made some jocular reply, and made his bow. No more notice was taken by Sheridan of this conversation, and Mrs. Siddons' name appeared in the bill, as usual, to play Lady Macbeth. On the fore-

noon of the day on which this announcement was made, Mrs. Siddons wrote to Mr. Sheridan simply repeating what she had before told him—that her determination was taken, that she would not appear, and it belonged to him to make some other arrangement for the evening. The play was not changed, however, nor was the slightest notice taken of Mrs. Siddons's letter, and she sat down to dinner in that equable state of enjoyment which flows from a temporary relaxation of accustomed exertion. About six o'clock in the evening, the time when Mrs. Siddons used to make her appearance in the dressing-room at the theatre, a messenger came to her house, reminding her that she was announced to play Lady Macbeth that night, and expressing the astonishment of the management that she had not arrived to make preparations for assuming her part. Mrs. Siddons returned a verbal answer, stating her resolution not to appear, and referring to Mr. Sheridan for her reasons. Time only had elapsed for the first

messenger to return, and for another to arrive, when Mr. Brandon, the principal box-keeper made his appearance, with a message to the same effect as the preceding, but a little more urgent. His remonstrances, however, were equally ineffectual, and he was obliged to depart with the same answer to his employers. Mrs. Siddons had taken her resolution; Mr. Sheridan had been apprised in time of it, and might now act as he thought proper. In a short time, the orator himself was announced, and entered to try his powers of persuasion upon the lady. "The audience were collecting, the curtain about to rise, *Macbeth*, and no other play, was to be acted, and Mrs. Siddons must make her appearance in it."—"The audience might collect, the curtain might rise, *Macbeth* might be played, but Mrs. Siddons would not perform in it."—"No sufficient excuse could be made; the house expected to be gratified by Mrs. Siddons's performance; and the theatre would be torn to pieces if the house

was disappointed. Mr. Sheridan would take no denial: he would make such representations, he said, as would throw the whole blame upon Mrs. Siddons; she would risk her popularity, she would injure an old friend." In short, he remonstrated and flattered alternately, and ended by handing Mrs. Siddons into his carriage, driving off to the theatre, and arriving in time to meet the expectations of the audience; Mrs. Siddons having been, by his irresistible powers of persuasion, now brought to comply with the utmost good humour.

The above anecdote is given upon the authority of the great actress herself.

Mr. Kemble found himself greatly annoyed in his management, and he attributed his impediments to the indolence, often to the yielding good humour, of Sheridan. He was, with the greatest difficulty, induced to retain his situation. Matters were carried, in defiance of his judgment; and thus there were persons encouraged to con-

temn his authority. "I was present," says Boaden, "one night in Suffolk Street, when he denounced his fixed, his unalterable determination. He expected Sheridan there after the house should be up, and aware of the great disarming powers of the orator, in a sort of inarticulate murmur, alarmed the party with the prospect of a scene ; and, as some very excellent claret was near him, he proceeded to fortify himself for the engagement. At length Sheridan arrived, took his place next to Mrs. Crouch at the table, looked at Kemble with kindness, but the kindness was neither returned nor acknowledged. The great actor now looked unutterable things, and occasionally emitted a *humming* sound like that of a bee, and groaned in the spirit inwardly. Crouch whispered two words in Sheridan's ear, which let him know, I believe, the *exact* cause of the present moody appearance of his manager. A considerable time elapsed, and frequent repetitions of the sound before mentioned occurred ; when, at last, ' like a pillar of state,' slowly up

rose Kemble, and in these words addressed the astonished proprietor:—‘ I am an EAGLE, whose wings have been bound down by frosts and snows ; but now I shake my pinions, and cleave into the general air, unto which I am born.’ * He then deliberately resumed his seat, and looked as if he had relieved himself from insupportable thralldom. Sheridan knew the complacency of man under the notion of a fine figure, and saw that his eagle was not absolutely irreclaimable ; he rose, took a chair next to the great actor ; and in two minutes resumed his old ascendancy. The tragedian soon softened into his usual forgiving temper ; and, I am ashamed to say, how late it was when, cordial as brothers, I took one arm of Kemble, and Sheridan the other, and resolutions were formed ‘ that melted as breath into the passing wind.’ ”

And such was the power of Sheridan upon this and every occasion.

* Kemble, when half drunk, used to speak in a kind of blank verse.

1796.

KEMBLE'S OPINION OF SHERIDAN.

Of Sheridan's eloquence, Kemble was an idolator: and having persuaded himself of a very extraordinary likeness that Sheridan bore to the countenance of Shakspeare, Boaden says he inclines to think, that if Mr. Kemble had formed a scale of which the author of *Hamlet* was at the summit, the next degree, would have been occupied by the author of *The School for Scandal*.

1796.

SHERIDAN AND THE PLAY-WRITER.

During Sheridan's management, an author* had produced a play which he offered to Covent Garden, saying that it would make Drury Lane a *splendid desert*. His play failed; but, soon after, prevailed on a friend to present a new one to Sheridan—"No! no!" exclaimed the latter, "I can't agree to connive at putting his former threat into effect."

* Sir Lumley Skeffington, we believe, is the author alluded to.

1798.

SHERIDAN'S PARLIAMENTARY WIT. ✓

He described the Bank as a demure matron playing the coquette with the Minister. "Last year," said he, "much was said in the newspapers about the connexion between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Bank. It was asserted that the banns had been forbidden. The conduct of the right honourable gentleman, indeed, showed that he cultivated the alliance on account of the lady's dowry, and not for the comfort of her society. At first, the affair seemed to wear the appearance of a penitent seduction; but now it has degenerated into a contented prostitution. The country wished to forgive the indiscretion, on the hopes of amendment; but what had produced the infatuation it was not easy to conjecture, unless the right honourable gentleman had given the old lady love-powder. The hey-day of the blood was over; but the rankness of passion had not sub-

sided, for the dear deceiver was taken again into favour, and the ruin he had occasioned was forgotton."

1798.

SHERIDAN'S PARLIAMENTARY PUNS.

In a committee, the chairman of which was Mr. Bragge, now Mr. Bathurst; and the orator, being in the punning vein, was determined to keep up the mirth which he had excited. Alluding to the stoppage of cash payments at the Bank, Mr. Sheridan said, without meaning any quibble on the name of the honourable chairman, the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer reminded him of an old proverb. The report of the committee was very favourable; but still the Bank must be kept under confinement: "Brag is a good dog," says the Minister, "but Holdfast is a better:" and the Bank must be kept under his tutelage till he finds it convenient to set the directors at liberty.

1797.

SHERIDAN AND MONK LEWIS.

Sheridan never gave Lewis any of the profits of the *Castle Spectre*. One day Lewis being in company with him, said, "Sheridan, I will make you a large bet." Sheridan, who was always ready to made a wager, (however he might find it inconvenient to pay it if lost,) asked eagerly, "What bet?"—"All the profits of my *Castle Spectre*," replied Lewis. "I will tell you what," said Sheridan, (who never found his match at repartee), "I will make you a very small one,—what it is worth."

1797.

SHERIDAN, COLMAN, AND KENNY.

On the 15th July, 1797, at the Haymarket Theatre, George Colman's excellent comedy of the "*Heir at Law*" was produced. Mr. Sheridan, the same year, was passing the autumn in the Isle of Wight, enjoying, as he used to say, one of his greatest delights, sailing backwards and forwards from Cowes to Southampton, and;

when he returned to town, he told a friend that he had seen the "Heir at Law" acted there. He said the play was not well performed, but he was greatly amused with it, and thought it an excellent comedy, and wished Colman could be prevailed upon to write just such another for Drury Lane. Many years after, the same friend went with him, one evening, to Covent Garden (after having dined together at the Piazza coffee house) and saw Kenny's admirable farce of "Raising the Wind" performed. No school-boy at home for the holidays could have laughed more heartily than he did; he was quite delighted with the character of Jeremy Diddler, and with the acting of Lewis and Emery.

1799.

SHERIDAN'S PROCRASTINATING HABITS AND
ECCENTRICITIES.

Kelly gives the following account of the production of Pizarro :

"Pizarro" was advertised, and every box in the house taken, before the fourth act of the

play was begun ; nor had I one single word of the poetry for which I was to compose the music. Day after day, was I attending on Mr. Sheridan, representing that time was flying ; and that nothing was done for me. His answer uniformly was, “ Depend upon it, my dear Mic, you shall have plenty of matter to go on with to-morrow ; ”— but day after day, that morrow came not, which, as my name was advertised as the composer of the music, drove me half crazy.

One day I was giving a dinner to the Earl of Guildford, the Marquis of Ormond (then Lord Ormond), my valued friend Sir Charles Bampfylde, Sir Francis Burdett, George Colman, J. Richardson, M. Lewis, and John Kemble ; and, about ten o'clock, when I was in the full enjoyment of this charming society, Mr. Sheridan appeared before us, and informed my friends, that he must carry me off with him that moment, to Drury Lane ; begged they would excuse my absence for one hour, and he

would return with me. I saw it would be useless to contradict him, so I went to the theatre, and found the stage and house lighted up, as it would have been for a public performance; not a human being there, except ourselves, the painters, and carpenters; and all this preparation was merely that he might see two scenes, those of Pizarro's tent, and the Temple of the Sun.

The great author established himself in the centre of the pit, with a large bowl of negus on the bench before him; nor would he move until it was finished. I expostulated with him upon the cruelty of not letting me have the words which I had to compose, not to speak of his having taken me away from my friends to see scenery and machinery, with which, as I was neither painter, nor carpenter, nor machinist, I could have nothing to do: his answer was, that he wished me to see the Temple of the Sun, in which the chorusses and marches were to come over the platform.—“To-morrow,” said he, “I promise I will come and take a cutlet with you

and tell you all you have to do. My dear Mic, you know you can depend upon *me*; and I know that I can depend upon *you*; but these bunglers of carpenters require looking after."

After this promise, we returned to my house; I found my party waiting; nor did we separate until five o'clock in the morning.

To my utter surprise, the next day, according to his own appointment, Mr. Sheridan really came to dinner. After the cloth was removed, he proposed business; I had pen, ink, music-paper, and a small piano-forte (which the Duke of Queensberry had given me, and which he had been accustomed to take with him in his carriage, when he travelled,) put upon the table with our wine. My aim was to discover the situations of the different chorusses and the marches, and Mr. Sheridan's ideas on the subject; and he gave them in the following manner:—"In the Temple of the Sun," said he, "I want the virgins of the Sun, and their high priest, to chant a solemn invocation to their deity."—I sang two or three bars of music to

him, which I thought corresponded with what he wished, and marked them down. He then made a sort of rumbling noise with his voice (for he had not the smallest idea of turning a tune), resembling a deep gruff "bow, wow, wow;" but, though there was not the slightest resemblance of an air in the noise he made, yet so clear were his ideas of effect that I perfectly understood his meaning, though conveyed through the medium of "a bow, wow, wow." At the time the house was overflowing, on the first night's performance, all that was written of the play was actually rehearsing, and that, incredible as it may appear, until the end of the fourth act, neither Mrs. Siddons, nor Charles Kemble, nor Barrymore, had all their speeches for the fifth! Mr. Sheridan was up stairs in the prompter's room, where he was writing the last part of the play, while the earlier parts were acting; and every ten minutes he brought down as much of the dialogue as he had done, piece-meal, into the green-room, abusing himself and his negligence, and making a thousand winning and

soothing apologies for having kept the performers so long in such painful suspense.

One remarkable trait in Sheridan's character, was his penetrating knowledge of the human mind; for no man was more careful in his carelessness: he was quite aware of his power over the performers, and of the veneration in which they held his great talents; had he not been so, he would not have ventured to keep them (Mrs. Siddons particularly), in the dreadful anxiety which they were suffering through the whole of the evening. Mrs. Siddons told me, that she was in an agony of fright; but Sheridan perfectly knew, that Mrs. Siddons, C. Kemble, and Barrymore, were quicker in study than any other performers concerned; and that he could trust them to be perfect in what they had to say, even at half-an-hour's notice. And the event proved that he was right: the play was received with the greatest approbation, and though brought out so late in the season, was played thirty-one nights; and for years afterwards, proved a mine of wealth to the Drury Lane treasury, and,

indeed, to all the theatres in the United Kingdom.

How unwillingly Sheridan always worked, may be judged by the following fact. Instead of preparing a prologue that should bear some remote reference to the interest of Pizarro, he sent King on to speak one, written by himself to be sure, but which had preceded Lady Craven's *Miniature Picture* in 1780.

1799.

SHERIDAN AND PIZARRO.

Although in substance, says Boaden, this play was Kotzebue's, yet Mr. Sheridan seemed to feel for it a full paternal solicitude. He sat in his box through the night, with Richardson, in a state of unappeasable anxiety. The reader will hardly conceive the object of his *greatest* fear; but I tell it to him with the fullest knowledge of the fact. As to Mrs. Jordan in Cora, he was sufficiently miserable—"she could not speak a line of it;" but he was dissatisfied with Mrs. Siddons; she had not *fallen in* with his

notion of the character ; and, at her opening of this precious piece of profligacy, he exclaimed, “ *There*, there, I told you, Richardson, that she never would fall into the character !” — and he was querulous to the last degree. With Kemble, however, he was perfectly transported ; as HE declaimed, he said to Richardson, “ Beautiful ! sublime ! perfection ! nothing ever equalled *THAT*.” At length, the great actress burst through the embarrassment of her situation, and produced a strong feeling in the house ; on which Richardson, a cooler judge, retorted his own terms upon him ; and when he expressed his pleasure, and was beginning an — “ *I told you*, Richardson,” in another key, “ *Yes*,” said his friend, “ and remember *I told you*, Sheridan, that she *would* fall into it at last.” *

* Of the adaptation of this play by Sheridan, the following anecdote is told. — *Pitt*, having been to see it, was asked his opinion. “ *If*,” said he, “ you mean what Sheridan wrote, there is nothing new in it, for I have heard ~~of~~ all long ago, in his speeches on *Hastings’s* trial.” ✓

1799.

✓ SHERIDAN AND THE NEWSPAPERS.

In the debate, 30th May, 1799, about putting down Sunday newspapers, Sheridan, amongst other things, in answer to Lord Belgrave, observed that, "in the law, as it at present exists, there was an exception in favour of selling mackerel, on the Lord's day; but would the Noble Lord recollect that people might think stale news as bad as stale mackerel!"

The Westminster Review gives the highest and most deserved praise to Sheridan for his meritorious exertions in favour of the liberty of the press on this occasion: and though all notice of them is omitted by Mr. Moore, it is justly remarked by the reviewer, that no event in Sheridan's life does him greater honour.

1800.

SHERIDAN AND MISS KELLY.

"Mr. Sheridan," says Kelly, "called upon me one day, in 1800, and said, 'Last night I was

at Brookes's; Charles Fox came there with Lord Robert Spencer,—they had both been at Drury Lane to see 'King John.' I asked him if he was pleased with the performance. He replied, 'that he was, particularly with Mrs. Siddons. But,' he added, 'there was a little girl who acted Prince Arthur, with whom I was greatly struck; her speaking was so perfectly natural: take my word for it, Sheridan, that girl in time will be at the head of her profession.' Mr. Sheridan at that period did not know that Miss Kelly was a relation of mine; but, upon this favourable report, went to see her, and told me that he perfectly agreed with Mr. Fox; and further said, 'that he should like to read the character of Monimia in the 'Orphan,' to her; for, at some future day, he was convinced she would act it admirably.' Praise from two such men, and such judges of the drama, as Fox and Sheridan, must have been highly flattering to any performer."

1800.

SHERIDAN'S TALENT IN INTRODUCING A STORY.

In the debate on the Habeas Corpus suspension, Sheridan, as usual, spoke in opposition. His speech was very amusing; in particular, he told a whimsical story of a man of the name of Paterson, who kept a shop at Manchester, and, having a tilted cart in use for his business, had the names of "Pitt and Paterson" painted on the front of it. This man, who was known to have no partner in his trade, was asked what he meant by the name of Pitt on his cart, as he had no share in the business—"Ah!" replied he, "he has indeed no share in the business; but a very large share in the profits of it." Sheridan was very fond of enlivening and illustrating his speeches with stories of this kind, and always introduced them very ingeniously—a talent which he possessed in common with the late Mr. Windham.

1802.

SHERIDAN'S PARLIAMENTARY WIT.

During the early part of the new Administration, Sheridan, in ridiculing the understanding supposed to exist between the ex-minister and his successor, among other remarks full of humour, said : “ I should like to support the present Minister on fair ground ; but what is he ? a sort of *outside passenger*,—or rather a man leading the horses round a corner, while reins, whip, and all, are in the hands of the coachman on the *box* ! (*looking at Mr. Pitt's elevated seat, three or four benches above that of the Treasury.*) Why not have an union of the two Ministers, or, at least, some intelligible connection ? When the ex-minister quitted office, almost all the *subordinate* Ministers kept their places. How was it that the whole family did not move together ? Had he only one *covered waggon* to carry *friends and goods* ? or has he left directions behind him that they may know where to call ? I remember a fable of *Aristophanes*, which is translated from Greek into decent

English—I mention this for the country gentlemen—it is of a man that sat so long on a seat (about as long, perhaps, as the ex-minister did on the Treasury-bench,) that he grew to it. When Hercules pulled him off, he left all the sitting part of the man behind him. The House can make the allusion.”

The following is another highly humorous passage from the same speech:—“But let France have colonies! Oh, yes! let her have a good trade, that she may be afraid of war, says the Learned Member,—that ’s the way to make Buonaparte love peace. He has had, to be sure, a sort of military education. He has been abroad, and is rather *rough company*; but if you put him behind the *counter* a little, he will mend exceedingly. When I was reading the Treaty, I thought all the names of foreign places, viz. Pondicherry, Chandenagore, Cochin, Martinico, &c. all *cessions*. Not they,—they are all so many *traps* and *holes* to catch this silly fellow in, and make a *merchant* of him! I really think the best way upon this principle would be

this:—Let the merchants of London open a *public subscription*, and set him up at once. I hear a great deal respecting a certain *statue*, about to be erected to the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) now in my eye, at a great expense. Send all that money over to the First Consul, and give him, what you talk of so much, *capital*, to begin trade with. I hope the Right Honourable Gentleman over the way will, like the First Consul, refuse a statue for the present, and postpone it as a work to posterity. There is no harm, however, in marking out the place. The Right Honourable Gentleman is musing, perhaps, on what square, or place, he will choose for its erection. I recommend the *Bank of England*. Now for the material. Not gold: no, no! —he has not left enough of it. I should, however, propose *papier maché* and old bank-notes!”

1802.

SHERIDAN'S HAPPY APPLICATION OF THE
THOUGHTS OF OTHERS.

The foregoing happy application of the fable of Hercules and Theseus to the Ministry, had

been first made by Gilbert Wakefield, in a letter to Mr. Fox, which the latter read to Sheridan a few days before the debate ; and the only remark that Sheridan made on hearing it, was, " What an odd pedantic fancy !" But the wit knew well the value of the jewel that the pedant had raked up, and lost no time in turning it to account, with all his accustomed skill.

Another instance of this propensity in Sheridan, (which made him a sort of Catiline in wit, " covetous of another's wealth, and profuse of his own,") occurred during the preceding Session. As he was walking down to the House with Sir Philip Francis and another friend, on the day when the address of thanks on the peace was moved, Sir Philip Francis pithily remarked, that " it was a peace which every one would be glad of, but no one would be proud of." Sheridan, who was in a hurry to get to the House, did not appear to attend to the observation ; but, before he had been many minutes in his seat, he rose, and, in a short

speech, (evidently made for the purpose of passing his stolen coin as soon as possible,) said, "This, sir, is a peace which every one will be glad of, but no one can be proud of."

A similar theft was his observation, that "half the debt of England had been incurred in pulling down the Bourbons, and the other half in setting them up;" which pointed remark he had heard in conversation, from Sir Arthur Pigott.

The simile of "stolen children, disfigured by gipsies, to make them pass for their own," was made use of by him in a speech upon Mr. Pitt's India Bill, in 1788, which he declared to be "nothing more than a bad plagiarism from Mr. Fox's; disfigured, indeed, as gipsies do stolen children, in order to make them pass for their own."^{*}

* Even this thought was not entirely Sheridan's, though he has perhaps improved upon the passage in Churchill,

"Like gipsies, lest the stolen brat be known,
Defacing first, then claiming for their own."

1802.

SHERIDAN'S EPIGRAM ON THE FRENCH INSTITUTE.

It was about this time that the Primary Electors of the National Institute of France, having proposed Haydn, the great composer, and Mr. Sheridan, as candidates for the class of Literature and the Fine Arts, the Institute, with a choice not altogether indefensible, elected Haydn. Some French epigrams on this occurrence, which appeared in the *Courier*, seem to have suggested to Sheridan the idea of writing a few English *jeux-d'esprit* on the same subject, which were intended for the newspapers, but never appeared. The following is a specimen :—

“ The wise decision all admire ;
’Twas just, beyond dispute—
Sound taste ! which, to Apollo’s lyre,
Preferr’d—a German flute !”

1802.

SHERIDAN'S NEGLIGENCE.

At this period, Drury Lane was in a very bad way,—the actors' salaries were greatly in arrear. Mr. Grubb, one of the proprietors, and Messrs. Hammersley, applied to the Lord Chancellor, praying that their demands on the theatre, with those of the old and new renters, might be taken out of the receipts before the performers were paid. Sheridan resisted this; and the actors, one and all, threatened to strike, if such an order were granted. The cause came on before the Chancellor. Sheridan pleaded his own cause against the whole Chancery bar, which was retained on the other side. In a most elaborate and eloquent speech, he stated the embarrassments of the theatre, the necessity of paying the performers, as no work could go on without workmen: if they withdrew their services, the doors must be closed, the property fall to pieces, and general ruin

ensue. From his eloquent tongue persuasion flowed, and won the triumph. The performers gained the day, and an order was granted, that they should be the first persons paid.

In the course of Mr. Sheridan's elaborate reply to these allegations, he acknowledged the commission of an act of carelessness, which could hardly have been credited, had it come from any other authority than himself. Wishing, as he said, to give some security to, and to have some security from, the Duke of Bedford, he applied to his grace to consolidate the whole rent at ten pounds per night, observing, that he did not ask it as a favour, but that, if he was inclined to lay himself under an obligation to any man, it would certainly be to the noble duke. His grace desired him to put his proposal in writing, which he did, and it was agreed to, on the part of the duke; yet, above twelve months after, Sheridan, feeling surprised at not having received any written acknowledgment of the proceeding, applied to the Duke of Bedford's

solicitor upon the subject, who assured him that an answer had been sent a year before ; upon which information he turned to his table, where lay the identical letter unopened.

1803.

SHERIDAN AND DIGNUM.

On the 5th of December this year, Mr. Reynolds, the prolific dramatist, produced a musical afterpiece at Drury Lane, entitled, " The Caravan ; or, the Driver and his Dog." There was some pretty music in it, composed by Reeve, and it had a very great run, and brought much money to the treasury. The chief attraction of the piece was a dog called Carlo.

One day Mr. Sheridan having dined with me, says Kelly, we went to see the performance of this wonderful dog : as we entered the green-room, Dignum (who played in the piece) said to Mr. Sheridan, with a woeful countenance, " Sir, there is no guarding against illness, it is truly lamentable to stop the run of a successful piece

like this ; but really—" " Really what ?" cried Sheridan, interrupting him.

" I am so unwell," continued Dignum, " ~~that~~ I cannot go on longer than to-night."

" You !" exclaimed Sheridan, " my good fellow, you terrified me ; I thought you were going to say that the dog was taken ill."

1804.

SHERIDAN AND HIS FRIEND RICHARDSON.

On the 9th of June, Mr. Richardson, one of the proprietors of Drury Lane, died from the effects of a ruptured blood vessel. He once said a strong thing of Sheridan : " It was his sincere conviction, that could some enchanter's wand touch him into the possession of fortune, he would instantly convert him into a being of the nicest honour, and most unimpeachable moral excellence."

Sheridan had for Richardson all the affection that a careless man can have for any thing. He made a point, therefore, of going down to

Egham, to see the last offices performed over his remains. Mr. Taylor says, "they arrived too late by about a quarter of an hour. The clergyman had just retired from the grave. Sheridan was in an agony of grief at this disappointment; but his powerful *name*, properly enforced upon the rector, procured a polite and humane repetition of the close of the service, to enable the tardy orator to say that he had attended the funeral of his friend.

The party dined together at the inn, and, after the cloth was removed, their kindness for the deceased broke forth in *designed* testimonials to his merits. Dr. Combe was to choose the kind of stone for his mausoleum, and Sheridan himself undertook to compose a suitable inscription, but no stone ever covered his remains, and the promised inscription never was written. Such are the hasty pledges of recent grief, and the performances of indolent genius. "They drained the cup," says Moore, "to his memory, and found oblivion at the bottom."

1806.

SHERIDAN'S FETE AT SOMERSET-HOUSE.

Every body knows, that during the short Administration of Mr. Fox's party, Mr. Sheridan held the office of Treasurer of the Navy, to which office, as every body also knows, a handsome residence is attached. It was during his brief authority in this situation, says Kelly, that he gave a splendid fête, to which not only the Ministers, and a long list of nobility were invited, but which, it was understood, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, his present Most Gracious Majesty, would honour with his presence:—a ball and supper followed the dinner. Morelli, Rovedino, and the Opera company, appeared in masks, and sang complimentary verses to the Prince, which Pananti wrote, and I composed. The music in "Macbeth" was then performed; and, in short, nothing could surpass the gaiety and splendour of the entertainment, which went off as well as was anticipated.

But, previous to the great consummation of all the hopes and wishes of the donor, I happened to call at Somerset House, about half past five; and there I found the brilliant, highly-gifted Sheridan, the star of his party, and Treasurer of the Navy, in an agony of despair. What was the cause?—had any accident occurred?—bad news from the Continent?—was the Ministry tottering?—In short, what was it that agitated so deeply a man of Sheridan's nerve and intellect, and temporary official importance?—He had just discovered that there was not a bit of cheese in the house—not even a paring.—What was to be done? Sunday, all the shops shut—without cheese his dinner would be incomplete.

I told him I thought some of the Italians would be prevailed upon to open their doors and supply him; and off we went together in a hackney-coach, cheese-hunting, at six o'clock on a Sunday afternoon—the dinner-hour being

seven, and His Royal Highness the Prince expected.

After a severe run of more than an hour, we prevailed upon a sinner, in Jermyn-street, to sell us some of the indispensable article, and got back just in time for mine host to dress to receive his company.

On this occasion he could buy no furniture nor ornaments, well knowing that an execution must seize them—tradesmen were unwilling to lend him; and great part of the paraphernalia was brought from the theatre, but with the precaution of a *friendly execution*, as a screen against other intruders; and, like the bailiff scene in Goldsmith's "Good Natured Man," his *legal assistants* were actually in livery, and waited upon the Prince!

1806.

SHERIDAN TAKING WATER.

At this period, Sheridan was much engaged in aquatic excursions, with his friends on the

river, arising from his official capacity as Treasurer of the Navy, and having the Navy office barge at his command.

It was said that his *taking water* so often was very extraordinary, as nobody had ever supposed him to be fond of that element.

1806.

ANECDOTES OF SHERIDAN'S WESTMINSTER
ELECTION.

In the course of the day, Paull, his antagonist, who was the son of a tailor, envious of the brilliant uniform, and more brilliant decorations of Sir S. Hood, observed, with some spleen, "that if he had chosen he might have appeared before the electors with such a coat, himself." "Yes, and you might have made it too," replied Sheridan.

Sheridan, in talking of his own son, on the hustings of Westminster, said, "that he would ask no greater distinction than for men to point

at him and say, ' There goes the father of Tom Sheridan.' "

Sheridan expressed his happiness at Hood's commanding place on the poll, and said " that he rejoiced more particularly, because, for his own part, he doubted whether he should be most chagrined at defeat, or at being Paull's colleague."

The election gave rise to much wit, as well as much scurrility. The keeper of a gambling-house in St. Anne's parish, being asked what trade he was, replied, that he was an *Ivory turner*.

As Mr. Sheridan was coming up to town in one of the public coaches, for the purpose of canvassing Westminster, at the time when Paull was his opponent, he found himself in company with two Westminster electors. In the course of conversation one of them asked the other to whom he meant to give his vote? When his friend replied, " To Paull, certainly; for though

I think him but a shabby sort of fellow, I would vote for any one rather than that rascal Sheridan !”

“ Do you know Sheridan ?” asked the stranger.

“ Not I, Sir,” answered the gentleman, “ nor should I wish to know him.”

The conversation dropped here ; but when the party alighted to breakfast, Sheridan called aside the other gentleman, and said :—

“ Pray who is that very agreeable friend of yours ? He is one of the pleasantest fellows I ever met with, and I should be glad to know his name ?”

“ His name is Mr. T—— : he is an eminent lawyer, and resides in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.”

Breakfast over, the party resumed their seats in the coach ; soon after which, Sheridan turned the discourse to the law. “ It is,” said he, “ a fine profession. Men may rise from it to the highest eminence in the state ; and it gives vast scope to the display of talent : many of the most virtuous and noble characters recorded in our

history have been lawyers. I am sorry, however, to add, that some of the greatest rascals have also been lawyers; but of all the rascals of lawyers I ever heard of, the greatest is one T——, who lives in Lincoln's Inn Fields."

"I am Mr. T——," said the gentleman.

"And I am Mr. Sheridan," was the reply.

The-jest was instantly seen; they shook hands, and instead of voting against the facetious orator, the lawyer exerted himself warmly in promoting his election.

From the hustings, in Covent Garden, Mr. Sheridan, talking of a low fellow in the crowd, who had been railing at him with coarse wit, called out loudly, "I can assure you that, if political affairs had not withdrawn my attention of late from the Theatre, I would back that person for writing a play, against all the authors who bring out the trash of the present day."

On another occasion during the Election,

Sheridan had promised to give his opponents a *check*! “Oh, d—— your checks, Sherry,” exclaimed a fellow in the crowd, “they’re worth nothing.”

1806.

SHERIDAN AND THE WHIG TAXES.

During this year Sheridan, having been told by a friend that his enemies took pleasure in speaking ill of him, on account of his favouring an obnoxious tax which his party were about to force through the House—“Well, let them,” said Sherry; “it is but fair that they should have some *pleasure* for their money!”

1806.

SHERIDAN’S JOKES UPON THE OLD ADMINISTRATION.

He ridiculed, in one of his speeches, the members of the late Administration, observing, how cold they must feel on that side of the House, since they were so few in number, and particularly as one, Lord Castlereagh, had lost his *Indian Shawl*, meaning the Board of Control;

another, Mr. Canning, had lost his *naval cloak*, the treasurership of the navy; and a third, Mr. Perceval, his *graceful professional robe*, as attorney-general.

1806.

SHERIDAN'S PUN ON POLESDEN.

Sheridan's residence of Polesden was near Leatherhead, respecting which there had been much punning at his expense: when he was told of this in the country, he replied, that on his return to town he would *get out of their debts*. "What will you pay them each?" said a friend: "Oh! I'll give them—a strapping!"

1807.

SHERIDAN'S CAREFUL POLISH OF HIS SPEECHES.

Sheridan's speeches were as minutely and elaborately worked up as any of the most highly finished witticisms in "The School for Scandal." For instance the following passage in a speech made in 1807, has been found among Sheridan's papers, written out in the following various forms:—

“ I cannot think patiently of such petty squabbles, while Buonaparte is grasping the nations ; while he is surrounding France, not with that iron frontier, for which the wish and childish ambition of Louis XIV. was so eager, but with kingdoms of his own creation ; securing the gratitude of higher minds as the hostage, and the fears of others as pledges for his safety. His are no ordinary fortifications. His martello towers are thrones ; sceptres tipt with crowns are the palisadoes of his entrenchments, and kings are his sentinels.”

“ Contrast the different attitudes and occupations of the two governments : — B. eighteen months from his capital, — head quarters in the villages, — neither Berlin or Warsaw, — de-throning and creating thrones, — the works he raises are monarchies, —sceptres his palisadoes, —thrones his martello towers.”

“ Commissioning kings, —erecting thrones, — martello towers, —Cambaceres count noses, — Austrians, fine dressed, like Pompey’s troops.”

“ B. fences with sceptres,—his martello towers are thrones,—he alone is France.”

1807.

SHERIDAN'S JOKE ON LOSING OFFICE.

Change of Ministry had absolutely, though not officially, taken place. Sheridan on going to the House was taken into custody for non-attendance to a call. He was heard to exclaim, as he was taken up stairs by Bellamy, “ How hard, my good fellow, it is to be no sooner *out* of office than *into* custody ?”

1807.

SHERIDAN AND THE RED HOUSE.

The Prince, on Sheridan's loss of office, gave him the Red House ; it was said that His R. H. was, on the *face* of the thing, compelled to do so, in order to keep Sheridan in *countenance* !

1807.

SHERIDAN'S NEGLECT OF HIS OWN WRITINGS.

Musical pieces, says Kelly, were often performed at Drury Lane : among others, Mr. Sheridan's

opera of "The Duenna," in which I performed the part of Ferdinand. It was customary with me, when I played at night, to read my part over in the morning, in order to refresh my memory. One morning, after reading the part of Ferdinand, I left the printed play of "The Duenna," as then acted, on the table. On my return home after having taken my ride, I found Mr. Sheridan reading it, and with pen and ink before him, correcting it. He said to me, "Do you act the part of Ferdinand from this printed copy?"

I replied in the affirmative, and added, "that I had done so for twenty years."

"Then," said he, "you have been acting great nonsense." He examined every sentence, and corrected it all through before he left me; the corrections I have now in his own handwriting. What could prove his negligence more than correcting an opera which he had written in 1775, in the year 1807; and then, for the first time, examining it, and abusing the manner in which it was printed?

1807.

SHERIDAN'S NEGLECT OF HIS OWN INTERESTS.

The following anecdote is also related of Sheridan by Kelly :

He had a particular desire to have an audience of His late Majesty, who was then at Windsor; it was on some point which he wished to carry, for the good of the theatre.—He mentioned it to His present Majesty, who, with the kindness which on every occasion he showed him, did him the honour to say, that he would take him to Windsor himself, and appointed him to be at Carlton House, to set off with His Royal Highness precisely at eleven o'clock. He called upon me, and said, " My dear Mic, I am going to Windsor with the Prince the day after to-morrow ; I must be with him at eleven o'clock in the morning, to a moment, and to be in readiness at that early hour, you must give me a bed at your house ; I shall then only have to cross the way to Carlton House, and be punctual to the appointment of His Royal Highness."

I had no bed to offer him but my own, which I ordered to be got in readiness for him; and he, with his brother-in-law, Charles Ward, came to dinner with me. Amongst other things at table, there was a roast neck of mutton, which was sent away untouched. As the servant was taking it out of the room, I observed, "There goes a dinner fit for a king;" alluding to His late Majesty's known partiality for that particular dish.

The next morning I went out of town, to dine and sleep, purposely to accommodate Mr. Sheridan with my bed; and got home again about four o'clock in the afternoon, when I was told by my servant, that Mr. Sheridan was up-stairs still, fast asleep—that he had been sent for several times, from Carlton House, but nothing could prevail upon him to get up.

It appears that, in about an hour after I had quitted town, he called at the saloon, and told my servant-maid, that "he knew she had a dinner fit for a king in the house, a cold roast neck of mutton," and asked her, if she had any

wine? She told him there were, in a closet, five bottles of port, two of madeira, and one of brandy, the whole of which, I found that he, Richardson, and Charles Ward, after eating the neck of mutton for dinner, had consumed:—on hearing this, it was easy to account for his drowsiness in the morning. He was not able to raise his head from his pillow, nor did he get out of bed until seven o'clock, when he had some dinner.

1807.

SHERIDAN AND KEMBLE.

Kemble came to him the same evening, and they again drank very deep, and I never saw Mr. Sheridan in better spirits. Kemble was complaining of want of novelty at Drury Lane Theatre; and that, as manager, he felt uneasy at the lack of it. “My dear Kemble,” said Mr. Sheridan, “don’t talk of grievances, now.” But Kemble still kept on, saying, “Indeed we must seek for novelty, or the theatre will sink—novelty, and novelty alone can prop it.”

“Then,” replied Sheridan with a smile, “if you want novelty, act ‘Hamlet,’ and have music played between your pauses.”

Kemble, however he might have felt the sarcasm, did not appear to take it in bad part. What made the joke tell at the time, was this: a few nights previous, while Kemble was acting Hamlet, a gentleman came to the pit door, and tendered half-price. The money-taker told him, that the third act was only then begun.

The gentleman looking at his watch, said, it must be impossible, for that it was half past nine o'clock.

“That is very true, Sir,” replied the money-taker; “but recollect, Mr. Kemble plays Hamlet to-night.”

1807.

SHERIDAN'S CONVERSATION.

Mr. Sheridan, says Kelly, although a delightful companion, was by no means disposed to loquacity—indeed quite the contrary; but when he

spoke he commanded universal attention ; and what he said deserved it. His conversation was easy and good-natured, and so strongly characterized by shrewdness, and a wit peculiarly his own, that it would be hard indeed, to find his equal as a companion. That he had his failings, who will deny ; but then, who amongst us has not ? One thing I may safely affirm—that he was as great an enemy to himself as to any body else.

1807.

SHERIDAN AND GEORGE III.

One evening that their late Majesties honoured Drury Lane Theatre with their presence, the play, by royal command, was “ The School for Scandal.” When Mr. Sheridan was in attendance to light their Majesties to their carriage, the King said to him, “ I am much pleased with your comedy of ‘ The School for Scandal ;’ but I am still more so with your play of the ‘ Rivals ;’—that is my favourite, and I will never give it up.”

Her Majesty, at the same time, said, "When, Mr. Sheridan, shall we have another play from your masterly pen?" He replied, that "he was writing a comedy, which he expected very shortly to finish."

I was told of this, says Kelly, and the next day, walking with him along Piccadilly, I asked him if he had told the Queen, that he was writing a play? He said he had, and that he actually was about one.

"Not you," said I to him; "you will never write again; you are afraid to write."

He fixed his penetrating eye on me, and said, "Of whom am I afraid?"

I said, "You are afraid of the author of *The School for Scandal*."

I believe, at the time I made the remark, he thought my conjecture was right.

1807.

SHERIDAN AND KELLY'S WINES.—BON MOT.

One evening, after we had dined together, says Kelly, I was telling him that I was placed in a dilemma by a wine-merchant from Hockheim, who had been in London to receive orders for the sale of hock. I had commissioned him (as he offered me the wine at a cheap rate) to send me six dozen. Instead of six dozen, he had sent me *sixteen*. I was observing, that it was a greater quantity than I could afford to keep, and expressed a wish to sell part of it.

“My dear Kelly,” said Mr. Sheridan, “I would take it off your hands with all my heart, but I have not the money to pay for it; I will, however, give you an inscription to place over the door of your saloon—Write over it, ‘Michael Kelly, Composer of Wine and Importer of Music.’”

1807.

SHERIDAN AND HIS SON TOM.

"The two Sheridans," says Kelly, "were supping with me one night after the opera, at a period when Tom expected to get into Parliament.

"I think, father," said he, "that many men, who are called great patriots in the House of Commons, are great humbugs. For my own part, if I get into Parliament, I will pledge myself to no party, but write upon my forehead in legible characters, 'To be let.'"

"And under that, Tom," said his father, "write—'Unfurnished.'"

Tom took the joke, but was even with him on another occasion.

Mr. Sheridan had a cottage about half a mile from Hounslow Heath,—Tom being very short of cash, asked his father to let him have some.

"Money I have none," was the reply.

"Be the consequence what it may, money I must have," said Tom.

“If that is the case, my dear Tom,” said the affectionate parent, “you will find a case of loaded pistols up-stairs, and a horse ready saddled in the stable,—the night is dark, and you are within half a mile of Hounslow Heath.”

“I understand what you mean,” said Tom, “but I tried that last night. I unluckily stopped Peake, your treasurer, who told me that you had been beforehand with him, and had robbed him of every sixpence he had in the world.”

1808.

SHERIDAN AND CUMBERLAND.

“On the 3rd of May, 1808,” says Kelly, “Mr. Cumberland produced, at Drury Lane Theatre, a piece entitled, ‘The Jew of Mogadore,’ to which I composed the music. It was with great reluctance that the Board of Management at Drury Lane accepted it: therefore, when I had finished the music of the first act, I rested on my oars until I knew their final determination.

I met Mr. Sheridan one day, in Essex Street in the Strand, and told him of it. He desired me to go on with it by all means; ‘For,’ said he, ‘if the opera should fail, you will fall with a fine classical scholar and elegant writer, as well as a sound dramatist, (such was his expressed opinion of Cumberland’s abilities.) ‘Go, instantly,’ continued he, ‘to those discerning critics, who call themselves the ‘Board of Management,’ and tell them, from me, if you please, that they are all asses, to presume to sit in judgment on the writings of such a man as Cumberland; and say, farther, that *I order* the opera to be accepted, and put into rehearsal.

“ ‘And pray, Sir,’ said I, ‘in what light am I to view this ‘Board of Management?’—What are they?

‘Pegs to hang hats upon,’ said Sheridan.”

1808.

SHERIDAN'S LOVE OF BETTING.

He was fond of betting on all subjects. The following memorandum of a bet is of somewhat a higher class of wagers than the One Tun Tavern has often had the honour of recording among its archives :—

“ One Tun, St. James's Market, May 26, 1808.

“ In the presence of Messrs. G. Ponsonby, R. Power, and Mr. Becher, Mr. Jones bets Mr. Sheridan five hundred guineas that he, Mr. Sheridan, does not write, and produce under his name, a play of five acts, or a first piece of three, within the term of three years from the 15th of September next. It is distinctly to be understood that this bet is not valid unless Mr. Jones becomes a partner in Drury Lane Theatre before the commencement of the ensuing season.

“ Richard Power.

R. B. SHERIDAN.

“ George Ponsonby.

FRED. EDW. JONES.

“ W. W. Becher.

“ N. B. W. W. Becher and Richard Power join, one fifty,—the other one hundred pounds in this bet.

“ R. POWER.”

1809.

SHERIDAN'S FORTITUDE ON THE DESTRUCTION
OF DRURY LANE.

On the night of the 24th of February, while the House of Commons was occupied with Mr. Ponsonby's motion on the Conduct of the War in Spain, and Mr. Sheridan was in attendance, with the intention, no doubt, of speaking, the House was suddenly illuminated by a blaze of light ; and, the debate being interrupted, it was ascertained that the Theatre of Drury Lane was on fire. A motion was made to adjourn ; but Mr. Sheridan said, with much calmness, that, " whatever might be the extent of the private calamity, he hoped it would not interfere with the public business of the country." He then left the House ; and, proceeding to Drury Lane, witnessed, with a fortitude which strongly interested all who observed him, the entire destruction of his property.

1809.

SHERIDAN'S JOKE on the BURNING of DRURY LANE.

As he sat at the Piazza Coffee-house, during the fire, taking some refreshment, a friend of his having remarked on the philosophic calmness with which he bore his misfortune, Sheridan answered, "A man may surely be allowed to take a glass of wine *by his own fire-side.*"

1809.

SHERIDAN'S FEELING FOR THE INFERIOR
PERFORMERS.

"The day after the fire, at dinner, lamenting the dreadful situation in which we," says Kelly, "as well as himself, were placed by the conflagration, he said, that the first consideration was to find a place where we could perform, under his 'Drury Lane patent;' for, though the theatre was destroyed, the patent was not, and that he would make every effort in his power to forward the interests and wishes of the company, without any private consideration of his own, until arrangements might be made to rebuild Drury

Lane Theatre. The only request he would make, which was with him a *sine qua non*, was, that the whole of the company, with heart and hand, should stand by one another, and that there should be no separation; 'For,' said he, 'I am aware that many of the principal performers may get profitable engagements at the different provincial theatres, but what then would become of the inferior ones, some of whom have large families? Heaven forbid that they should be deserted!—No: I most earnestly recommend and entreat, that every individual belonging to the concern should be taken care of. Let us make a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together; and above all, make the general good our sole consideration. Elect yourselves into a committee; but keep in your remembrance even the poor sweepers of the stage, who, with their children, must starve, if not protected by our fostering care.'

1809.

SHERIDAN'S PUN ON THE O. P. DISTURBANCES.

During the "O. P. Row," when Sheridan was condoling with Kemble on the prospect of a speedy end being put to the popular disturbance, Kemble said, that he had a *hope* of its conclusion from the trial of Clifford *versus* Brandon;—"For my part," replied Sheridan, "I see nothing in your *hope*, but an *aitch* and an O. P."

1812.

SHERIDAN AND KEAN.

Mr. Sheridan, though very curious to see Kean, would not go to the theatre; having made a vow, in consequence of some offence he had received from the Committee of Management, never to enter its walls. Mrs. Sheridan, who at this time was very ill, and confined for many weeks, had also a great curiosity to see Mr. Kean perform the part of "Othello;"

but as she could not venture to the theatre, Mr. Sheridan requested Kean to come to his house, and read the play ;—which he did.

The following day, says Kelly, I saw Sheridan, and asked his opinion of Kean ; he told me he was very much pleased with him, that he had once studied the part of Othello himself, to act at Sir Watkin William Wynn's private theatre, in Wales ; and that Kean's conception of Othello was the precise counterpart of his own. This, which, as it was intended, no doubt, for a compliment, would have sounded like vanity in any body else, in a man of Mr. Sheridan's acknowledged ability, must have been highly flattering to Mr. Kean.

1812.

SHERIDAN'S LAST FLASHES OF WIT.

On the 16th July, 1812, when opposing a bill for the preservation of the peace in Ireland,

he ridiculed the past fears of insurrection in this country; and observed, that after all the alarm "*nine* taylors and *one* pike had been discovered in a back garret in Tooley street in the Borough; and a preceding speaker having said there could be no strife where there was no opposition, " True," said Sheridan, " just as there can be no rape where there is no opposition !"

1812.

SHERIDAN'S LAST WORDS IN PARLIAMENT.

The following words were the last uttered by Sheridan within the walls of the House of Commons :—

" Yet, after the general subjugation and ruin of Europe, should there ever exist an independent historian to record the awful events that produced this universal calamity, let that historian have to say,—‘ Great Britain fell, and with her fell all the best securities for the

charities of human life, for the power and honour, the fame, the glory, and the liberties, not only of herself, but of the whole civilised world.' ”

1812.

SHERIDAN AND THE PRINCE.

The following statement is from the Sun, and if we believe the motto of that paper,

——— “ *Solem quis dicere falsum
Audeat ?* ”———

we are bound to receive its assertions with respect.—A few months after the failure of Mr. Sheridan, at the late General Election, in his efforts to obtain his seat for Stafford, the writer of this article waited upon him, by invitation, when he spoke of that virulence, hostility, and vulgar turmoil, which a popular election never fails to excite, with the complacency of a man who saw nothing in success or failure worthy of particular congratulation

or anger. The flow of public honour found him calm and moderate in his satisfaction; and its ebb left him tranquil and equable in temper and self-possession. Mr. Sheridan at that time stated the following particulars relating to his political embarrassment. A short time previous to the death of Mr. Perceval, that Minister was in the habit of frequently calling on Mr. S. apparently in the mere spirit of friendly intercourse. The Parliamentary indolence of Mr. S. at this time was as well known as his adversity, and the still independent mind of the patriot suspected these civilities to be political. At length Mr. Perceval, in a way of general remark, said in a kind of conversational parenthesis, "Sheridan, you never give us a vote now."—"Look at my political life," said Mr. S. "my poverty carries my excuse with it." Up to this period, an illustrious Personage had ever received Mr. S. with the most undisguised kindness and

cordiality. On some occasion, shortly after this circumstance (but succeeding the General Election), Mr. S. saw his royal friend, and mentioned to him the visit of his Minister, adding something to the effect, that his life was at the service of his Prince, but that his character was the property of his country. The Prince, with all that gentlemanly suavity of manners which never deserts him under any hostility of feeling, replied, that Sheridan "might impeach his Ministers on the morrow—that it should not impair their friendship."—The Prince then turned on his heel, and we believe from that moment the Prince and Mr. Sheridan never exchanged another word.

1812.

SHERIDAN'S FAILURE AT STAFFORD, AND RUIN.

The failure of Sheridan at Stafford completed his ruin. He was now excluded both from the

Theatre and from Parliament :—the two anchors by which he held in life were gone, and he was left a lonely and helpless wreck upon the waters. The Prince Regent (says Moore) offered to bring him into Parliament ; but the thought of returning to that scene of his triumphs and his freedom, with the Royal owner's mark, as it were, upon him, was more than he could bear—and he declined the offer. Indeed, miserable and insecure as his life was now, when we consider the public humiliations to which he would have been exposed, between his ancient pledge to Whiggism and his attachment and gratitude to Royalty, it is not wonderful that he should have preferred even the alternative of arrests and imprisonments to the risk of bringing upon his political name any further tarnish in such a struggle. Neither could his talents have much longer continued to do themselves justice, amid the pressure of such cares, and the increased indulgence of habits, which, as is usual, gained upon him, as all other indulgen-

ces vanished But, unfortunately, the same charm that once had served to give a quicker flow to thought, was now employed to muddy the stream.

“We are willing,” says the *Westminster Review*, “to ascribe this representation to Mr. Moore’s want of information, and to hold him guilty,—not of suppressing an important fact, but of the minor offence of failing to search out the truth. The truth then is, that the Prince Regent did not merely offer to bring Sheridan into Parliament, but about the latter end of 1812, with a view to this object, his Royal Highness conveyed to him, through Lord Moira, four thousand pounds. The money was deposited by his Lordship with Mr. Cocker, the solicitor, who acted as a friend to Mr. Sheridan on this occasion, and a treaty was opened with Mr. Attersol for a seat for Wootton Bassett.

“The negociation, indeed, was all but concluded, nothing being wanting but Sheridan’s presence on the spot. On three successive

evenings, Mr. Cocker dined with Sheridan at a hotel in Albemarle-street, a chaise being on each night waiting at the door to convey them down to Wootton Bassett; on each night Sheridan, after his wine, postponed the journey to the next day, and on the fourth day he altogether abandoned the project of purchasing a seat in Parliament, received the four thousand pounds, and applied them, as he was warranted to do by the permission of the donor, to his private uses. This transaction certainly delivers the King from the reproach of never having ministered to the relief of Sheridan—a charge which has been urged against His Majesty in numberless smart satires and lampoons.

“How it happened that this fact escaped the researches of Mr. Moore we may not conjecture, and what renders the omission (for so we shall consider it) the more extraordinary is, that a rumour of such a transaction has long been afloat, and the means of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of it were obvious and

easy. It is natural to suppose, also, that our author must, in composing this work, have felt no ordinary anxiety to do the King such justice as consisted with strict truth, and that he would, accordingly, have closely investigated a report exculpatory of His Majesty, as tending to show that he had been kinder than the world has been given to believe, to Sheridan."

1813.

MR. MOORE'S CHARACTER OF SHERIDAN'S CONVERSATION IN THE LATTER PART OF HIS LIFE.

In private society he could even now (before the Rubicon of the cup was passed,) fully justify his high reputation for agreeableness and wit; and a day which it was my good fortune to spend with him, at the table of Mr. Rogers, has too many mournful, as well as pleasant, associations connected with it, to be easily forgotten by the survivors of the party. The company consisted but of Mr. Rogers himself, Lord Byron, Mr. Sheridan, and the writer of this

Memoir. Sheridan knew the admiration his audience felt for him ; the presence of the young poet, in particular, seemed to bring back his own youth and wit ; and the details he gave of his early life were not less interesting and animating to himself than delightful to us. It was in the course of this evening that, describing to us the poem which Mr. Whitbread had written and sent in, among the other Addresses for the opening of Drury Lane, and which, like the rest, turned chiefly on allusions to the Phœnix, he said,—“ But Whitbread made more of this bird than any of them :—he entered into particulars, and described its wings, beak, tail, &c. ; in short, it was a *Poulterer’s* description of a Phœnix !”

1813.

✓ LORD BYRON’S OPINION OF SHERIDAN.

The following is an extract from a diary kept by Lord Byron in 1812-13 :

“ Saturday, December, 8, 1813.

“ Lord Holland told me a curious piece of *sentimen-*

*talit*y in Sheridan. The other night we were all delivering our respective and various opinions on him and other '*hommes marquans*,' and mine was this:—'Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the *best* of its kind. He has written the *best* comedy (School for Scandal), the *best* opera (The Duenna—in my mind far before that St. Giles's lampoon, The Beggar's Opera), the *best* farce (The Critic—it is only too good for an after-piece), and the *best* Address (Monologue on Garrick), —and, to crown all, delivered the very *best* oration (the famous Begum Speech) ever conceived or heard in this country.' Somebody told Sheridan this the next day, and, on hearing it, he burst into tears!—Poor Brinsley If they were tears of pleasure, I would rather have said those few, but sincere, words, than have written the Iliad, or made his own celebrated Philippic. Nay, his own comedy never gratified me more than to hear that he had derived a moment's gratification from any praise of mine—humble as it must appear to 'my elders and my betters.'"

1814.

SHERIDAN'S DISTRESSES.

The money arising from the sale of his theatrical property was soon exhausted by the various claims upon it, and he was driven to

part with all that he most valued, to satisfy further demands and provide for the subsistence of the day. Those books, which, as I have already mentioned, were presented to him by various friends, now stood, in their splendid bindings, on the shelves of the pawnbroker.* The handsome cup, given him by the electors of Stafford, shared the same fate. Three or four fine pictures by Gainsborough, and one by Morland, were sold for little more than five hundred pounds; and even the precious portrait of his first wife, by Reynolds, though not actually sold during his life, vanished away from his eyes into other hands.

* In most of them, too, were the names of the givers. The delicacy with which Mr. Harrison of Wardour Street (the pawnbroker with whom the books and the cup were deposited) behaved, after the death of Mr. Sheridan, deserves to be mentioned with praise. Instead of availing himself of the public feeling at that moment, by submitting these precious relics to the competition of a sale, he privately communicated to the family, and one or two friends of Sheridan, the circumstance of his having such articles in his hands, and demanded nothing more than the sum regularly due on them.

1815.

SHERIDAN'S DESPAIRING LETTER TO WHITBREAD.

One of the most humiliating trials of his pride was yet to come. In the spring of this year he was arrested and carried to a spunging-house, where he remained two or three days, and from which the following painful letter to Whitbread was written :

“ Tooke's Court, Cursitor Street, Thursday, past two.

“ I have done every thing in my power with the solicitors, White and Founes, to obtain my release, by substituting a better security for them than their detaining me—but in vain.

“ Whitbread, putting all false professions of friendship and feeling out of the question, you have no right to keep me here!—for it is in truth *your* act:—if you had not forcibly withheld from me the *twelve thousand pounds*, in consequence of a threatening letter from a miserable swindler, whose claim YOU in particu-

lar knew to *be a lie*, I should at least have been out of the reach of *this* state of miserable insult—for that, and that only lost me my seat in Parliament. And I assert that you cannot find a lawyer in the land, that is not either a natural-born fool or a corrupted scoundrel, who will not declare that your conduct in this respect was neither warrantable nor legal—but let that pass *for the present*.

“Independently of the 1000*l.* ignorantly withheld from me on the day of considering my last claim, I require of you to answer the draft I send herewith on the part of the Committee, pledging myself to prove to them on the first day I can *personally* meet them, that there are still thousands and thousands due to me, both legally and equitably, from the Theatre. My word ought to be taken on this subject; and you may produce to them this document, if one among them could think that, under all the circumstances, your conduct required a justification. O God! with what mad

confidence have I trusted *your word*—I ask *justice* from you, and *no boon*. I enclosed you yesterday three different securities, which, had you been disposed to have acted even as a private friend, would have made it *certain* that you might have done so *without the smallest risk*. These you discreetly offered to put into the fire, when you found the object of your humane visit satisfied by seeing me safe in prison.

“ I shall only add, that, I think, if I know myself, had our lots been reversed, and I had seen you in my situation, and had left Lady E. in that of my wife, I would have risked 600*l.* rather than have left you so—although I had been in no way accessory in bringing you into that condition.

S. Whitbread, Esq.

R. B. SHERIDAN.”

On his return home, however, to Mrs. Sheridan, (some arrangements having been made by Whitbread for his release,) all his fortitude forsook him, and he burst into a long and passion-

ate fit of weeping at the profanation, as he termed it, which his person had suffered.

1815.

SHERIDAN'S PRESENTIMENT OF HIS DEATH.

He had for some months had a feeling that his life was near its close; and I find the following touching passage in a letter from him to Mrs. Sheridan, after one of those differences which will sometimes occur between the most affectionate companions, and which, possibly, a remonstrance on his irregularities and want of care of himself occasioned:—"Never again let one harsh word pass between us, during the period, which may not perhaps be long, that we are in this world together, and life, however clouded to me, is mutually spared to us. I have expressed this same sentiment to my son, in a letter I wrote to him a few days since, and I had his answer—a most affecting one, and, I am sure, very sincere—and have since cordially embraced him. Don't imagine that I am ex-

pressing an interesting apprehension about myself which I do not feel."

1815.

SHERIDAN AT DRURY LANE.

Though the new Theatre of Drury Lane had now been three years built, his feelings had never allowed him to set his foot within its walls. About this time, however, he was persuaded by his friend, Lord Essex, to dine with him and go in the evening to his Lordship's box, to see Kean. Once there, the "*genius loci*" seems to have regained its influence over him; for, on missing him from the box, between the acts, Lord Essex, who feared that he had left the house, hastened out to inquire, and, to his great satisfaction, found him installed in the Green-room, with all the actors around him, welcoming him back to the old region of his glory, with a sort of filial cordiality. Wine was immediately ordered, and a bumper to the health of Mr. Sheridan was drunk by all present,

with the expression of many a hearty wish that he would often, very often, re-appear among them.

1816.

SHERIDAN'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

The following statement is from Mr. Moore's work :—

The disorder, with which he was now attacked, arose from a diseased state of the stomach, brought on partly by irregular living, and partly by the harassing anxieties that had, for so many years, without intermission beset him. His powers of digestion grew every day worse, till he was at length unable to retain any sustenance. Notwithstanding this, however, his strength seemed to be but little broken, and his pulse remained, for some time, strong and regular.

Connected, no doubt, with the disorganisation of his stomach was an abscess, from which, though distressingly situated, he does not appear

to have suffered much pain. In the spring of this year, however, he was obliged to confine himself, almost entirely, to his bed.

While death was thus gaining fast on Sheridan, the miseries of his life were thickening round him also; nor did the last corner, in which he now lay down to die, afford him any asylum from the clamours of his legal pursuers. Writs and executions came in rapid succession, and bailiffs at length gained possession of his house. It was about the beginning of May, that Lord Holland, on being informed by Mr. Rogers (who was one of the very few that watched the going out of this great light with interest) of the dreary situation in which his old friend was lying, paid him a visit one evening, in company with Mr. Rogers, and by the cordiality, suavity, and cheerfulness of his conversation, shed a charm round that chamber of sickness, which, perhaps, no other voice but his own could have imparted.

Such a visit, therefore, could not fail to be

soothing and gratifying to Sheridan ; and, on parting, both Lord Holland and Mr. Rogers comforted him with the assurance, that some steps should be taken to ward off the immediate evils that he dreaded.

An evening or two after (Wednesday, May 15,) Mr. Rogers, on returning home, found the following afflicting note upon his table :—

“ Saville Row.

“ I find things settled so that 150*l.* will remove all difficulty. I am absolutely undone and broken-hearted. I shall negociate for the Plays successfully in the course of a week, when all shall be returned. I have desired Fairbrother to get back the Guarantee for thirty.

“ They are going to put the carpets out of window, and break into Mrs. S.’s room and *take me*—for God’s sake let me see you.

“ R. B. S.”

It was too late to do any thing when this note was received, being then between twelve and

one at night; but Mr. Rogers and Mr. Moore walked down to Saville Row together, to assure themselves that the threatened arrest had not yet been put in execution. A servant spoke to them out of the area, and said that all was safe for the night, but that it was intended, in pursuance of this new proceeding, to paste bills over the front of the house next day.

On the following morning Mr. Moore was early with Mr. Rogers, and willingly undertook to be the bearer of a draft for 150*l.* to Saville Row. He found Mr. Sheridan good-natured and cordial as ever; and, though he was then within a few weeks of his death, his voice had not lost its fulness or strength, nor was that lustre, for which his eyes were so remarkable, diminished. He showed, too, his usual sanguineness of disposition in speaking of the price that he expected for his dramatic Works, and of the certainty he felt of being able to arrange all his affairs, if his complaint would but suffer him to leave his bed.

In the following month, his powers began rapidly to fail him ;—his stomach was completely worn out, and could no longer bear any kind of sustenance. During the whole of this time, as far as I can learn, it does not appear that (with the exceptions I have mentioned) any one of his Noble or Royal friends ever called at his door, or even sent to inquire after him !

In an interview with Doctor Bain, Mr. Vaughan stated, that a sum had been placed at his disposal, amounting, in all, to 200*L*.^{*}; and the proposition being submitted to Mrs. Sheridan, that lady, after consulting with some of her relatives, returned for answer that, as there was a sufficiency of means to provide all that was necessary for her husband's comfort, as well as her own, she begged to decline the offer.

* Mr. Vaughan did not give Doctor Bain to understand that he was authorized to go beyond the 200*L*. ; but, in a conversation which I had with him a year or two after, in contemplation of this Memoir, he told me that a further supply was intended.

Mr. Vaughan always said, that the donation, thus meant to be doled out, came from a Royal hand ;—but this is hardly credible. It would be safer, perhaps, to let the suspicion rest upon that gentleman's memory, of having indulged his own benevolent disposition in this disguise, than to suppose it possible that so scanty and reluctant a benefaction was the sole mark of attention accorded by a “gracious Prince and Master” to the last, death-bed wants of one of the most accomplished and faithful servants, that Royalty ever yet raised or ruined by its smiles.

In the mean time, the clamours and incursions of creditors increased. A sheriff's officer at length arrested the dying man in his bed, and was about to carry him off, in his blankets, to a spunging-house, when Doctor Bain interfered—and, by threatening the officer with the responsibility he must incur, if, as was but too probable, his prisoner should expire on the way, averted this outrage.

Succour was now too late ;—the spirit, that

these unavailing tributes might once have comforted, was now fast losing the consciousness of every thing earthly, but pain. After a succession of shivering fits, he fell into a state of exhaustion, in which he continued, with but few signs of suffering, till his death. A day or two before that event, the Bishop of London read prayers by his bed-side; and on Sunday, the seventh of July, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, he died.

On the following Saturday the funeral took place;—his remains having been previously removed from Saville Row to the house of his friend, Mr. Peter Moore, in Great George-street, Westminster. From thence, at one o'clock, the procession moved on foot to the Abbey, where, in the only spot in Poet's Corner that remained unoccupied, the body was interred; and the following simple inscription marks its resting-place:—

“ RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN,

BORN 1751,

DIED 7TH JULY, 1816.

THIS MARBLE IS THE TRIBUTE OF AN ATTACHED

FRIEND,

PETER MOORE.”

Seldom has there been such an array of rank as graced this funeral.* The pall-bearers were the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Lauderdale, Earl Mulgrave, the Lord Bishop of London, Lord Holland, and Lord Spencer. Among the mourners were His Royal Highness the Duke of York, His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, the Duke of Argyle, the Marquisses of Anglesea and Tavistock; the Earls of Thanet, Jersey, Harrington, Besborough, Mexborough, Rosslyn, and Yarmouth. Lords George Cavendish and Robert Spencer; Viscounts Sid-

* It was remarked by a French Journal, in contrasting the penury of Sheridan's latter years with the splendour of his funeral, that “ France is the place for a man of letters to live in, and England the place for him to die in.” ✓

mouth, Granville, and Duncannon ; Lords Rivers, Erskine, and Lynedoch ; the Lord Mayor ; Right Hon. G. Canning, and W. Pole, &c. &c.

1816.

OUTRAGE UPON SHERIDAN'S REMAINS.

The remains of Sheridan were removed from Saville Row, to the residence of his kinsman, in Great George Street, Westminster. There they lay in state, to indulge the longing grief of the few friends who clung to his bleak and shattered fortunes. On the forenoon of the day fixed for their interment, a gentleman dressed in deep mourning entered the house; and requested of the attendant, who watched in the chamber of death, to allow him a last look of his departed friend. He professed to have known the deceased early in life; and to have undertaken a long journey in order to seize a parting glance of his pale features. The agony and earnestness with which the application was urged, lulled the suspicions of the serving-man

if any had risen in his mind ; and, after a slight hesitation, it was assented to. The lid of the coffin was removed—the body unshrouded, and the death-chilled frame revealed to view. The gentleman gazed for some minutes upon it ; and then fumbling in his waistcoat pocket, produced a bailiff's " wand," with which he touched the face, and instantly declared, to the horror and alarm of the servant, that he had arrested the corpse in the King's name, for a debt of 500*l*. Before the requisite explanations had been gone through, the funeral group had assembled. The circumstance was instantly made known to Mr. Canning, who took Lord Sidmouth aside, and begged his advice and assistance. Lest the delay might mar the progress of the sorrowful train, they generously agreed to discharge the debt ; and two checks for 250*l*. each were given over to the bailiff, and accepted of by him. Without their timely interference, the procession might have been detained for some hours ; and, even in spite of their prompt sym-

pathy and kindness, the multitudes who had congregated in the Palace Yard could not help murmuring when the stated hour was allowed to elapse so long without any apparent reason.

VINDICATION OF THE PRINCE'S CONDUCT TO
SHERIDAN.

The following statement, in vindication of the Prince, lately appeared in a ministerial paper :—

“ When Mr. Sheridan was on his death-bed, he was visited by Mr. Taylor Vaughan, who found him in a situation, arising from distress and poverty, that we cannot venture to describe. With feelings strongly excited, Mr. Vaughan hastened to Carlton House, and represented to Colonel M'Mahon the scene he had just witnessed. The Colonel instantly went into the Prince Regent's apartment, and made his Royal Highness acquainted with what had been related. The Prince, who had not been previously informed of Mr. Sheridan's illness, desired that immediate pecuniary assistance should be conveyed to him, and named the sum of 500*l.* as a present relief. Colonel M'Mahon communicated to Mr. Vaughan the Prince's command : but Mr. V. said that so large a sum was altogether unnecessary in the first in-

stance, and could only be prevailed upon to take 200*l.* promising to ask for the remainder when it was wanted. Part of this sum he directly applied, and furnished his sick friend with all that could contribute to his comfort. Shortly afterwards, however, Mr. V. again repaired to Carlton House, and to the amazement of Colonel M'Mahon, returned to him the whole of the money which had been paid out of the Prince's privy purse: stating that Mr. Sheridan's friends had insisted on restoring it to the donor, as they were not willing that, under existing circumstances, Mr. Sheridan should lay himself under obligations to the Prince Regent."

New Times, Nov. 19, 1825.

MISCELLANEOUS ANECDOTES AND BON MOTS.

WE have now finished the series of anecdotes and bons mots, of which the point was assisted by dates: the rest we shall class together without any attempt at order.

SHERIDAN'S LABORIOUS POLISH OF HIS WRITINGS.

A striking characteristic of Sheridan, as an orator and a writer, was the great degree of labour and preparation which his productions in both lines cost him. Of this the reader has seen some curious proofs in the preceding pages. Though the papers left behind him have added nothing to the stock of his *chef-d'œuvres*, they have given us an insight into his manner of producing his great works, which is, perhaps, the next most interesting thing to the works themselves.

The same marks of labour are discoverable throughout the whole of his Parliamentary career. He never made a speech of any moment, of which the sketch, more or less detailed, has not been found among his papers—with the showier passages generally written two or three times over (often without any material change in their form) upon small detached pieces of paper, or on cards. To such minutiae of effect did he attend, that there has been found, in more than one instance, a memorandum made of the precise place in which the words, "Good God! Mr. Speaker," were to be introduced. These preparatory sketches are continued down to his latest displays; and it is observable that when, from the increased derangement of his affairs, he had no longer leisure or collectedness enough to prepare, he ceased to speak.

The only time he could have found for this pre-arrangement of his thoughts (of which few, from the apparent idleness of his life, suspected

him) must have been during the many hours of the day that he remained in bed,—when, frequently, while the world gave him credit for being asleep, he was employed in laying the frame-work of his wit and eloquence for the evening.

SHERIDAN'S WAY OF PRODUCING HIS BONS MOTS.

His *bons mots* in society were not always to be set down to the credit of the occasion; but that frequently, like skilful priests, he prepared the miracle of the moment before-hand. Nothing, indeed, could be more remarkable than the patience and tact, with which he would wait through a whole evening for the exact moment, when the shaft, which he had ready feathered, might be let fly with effect. There was no effort, either obvious or disguised, to lead to the subject—no “question detached (as he himself expresses it) to draw you into the ambuscade of his ready-made joke”—and, when the

lucky moment *did* arrive, the natural and accidental manner, in which he would let this treasured sentence fall from his lips, considerably added to the astonishment and the charm, and his own apparent unconsciousness of the value of what he said, might have deceived dull people into the idea that there was really nothing in it.

The consequence of this practice of waiting for the moment of effect was (as all, who have been much in his society, must have observed,) that he would remain inert in conversation, and even taciturn, for hours, and then suddenly come out with some brilliant sally, which threw a light over the whole evening, and was carried away in the memories of all present. Nor must it be supposed that in the intervals, either before or after these flashes, he ceased to be agreeable; on the contrary, he had a grace and good nature in his manner, which gave a charm to even his most ordinary sayings,—and there was, besides, that ever-speaking lustre in

his eye, which made it impossible, even when he was silent, to forget who he was.

SHERIDAN'S REPETITIONS OF HIMSELF.

A curious instance of the care with which he treasured up the felicities of his wit appears in the use he made of one of those epigrammatic passages, which the reader may remember among the memorandums for his *Comedy of Affectation*, and which, in its first form, ran thus:—
“He certainly has a great deal of fancy, and a very good memory; but, with a perverse ingenuity, he employs these qualities as no other person does—for he employs his fancy in his narratives, and keeps his recollection for his wit:—when he makes his jokes, you applaud the accuracy of his memory, and 'tis only when he states his facts that you admire the flights of his imagination.” After many efforts to express this thought more concisely, and to reduce the language of it to that condensed and elastic state,

in which alone it gives force to the projectiles of wit, he kept the passage by him patiently some years,—till he at length found an opportunity of turning it to account, in a reply to Mr. Dundas, in the House of Commons, when, with the most extemporaneous air, he brought it forth, in the following compact and pointed form: “The Right Honourable Gentleman is indebted to his memory for his jests, and to his imagination for his facts.” ✓

SHERIDAN'S COOKERY.

No one was so ready and cheerful in promoting the amusements of a country-house; and on a rural excursion he was always the soul of the party. His talent at dressing a little dish was often put in requisition on such occasions, and an Irish stew was that on which he particularly plumed himself. Some friends of his will recall with delight a day of this kind which they passed with him, when he made the whole party

act over the Battle of the Pyramids on Marsden Moor, and ordered " Captain " Creevey and others upon various services, against the cows and donkeys entrenched in the ditches. Being of so playful a disposition himself, it was not wonderful that he should take such pleasure in the society of children. Mr. Moore says, " I have been told, as doubly characteristic of him, that he has often, at Mr. Monckton's, kept a chaise and four waiting half the day for him at the door, while he romped with the children."

SHERIDAN'S *VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ*.

In what are called *Vers de Société*, or drawing-room verses, he took great delight; and there remain among his papers several sketches of these trifles. Mr. Moore has heard him repeat, in a ball-room, some verses which he had lately written on Waltzing, of which he has given us the following :—

" With tranquil step, and timid downcast glance,
 Behold the well-pair'd couple now advance.
 In such sweet posture our first parents mov'd,
 While, hand in hand, through Eden's bowers they
 rov'd,
 Ere yet the devil, with promise foul and false,
 Turn'd their poor heads and taught them how to
 walse.
 One hand grasps hers, the other holds her hip—
 * * * * *
 For so the law's laid down by Baron Trip."*

He had a sort of hereditary fancy for difficult trifling in poetry; particularly for that sort which consists in rhyming to the same word through a long string of couplets, till every rhyme that the language supplies for it is exhausted. The following are specimens from a poem of this kind, which he wrote on the loss of a lady's trunk:—

* This gentleman, whose name suits so aptly as a legal authority on the subject of waltzing, was, at the time these verses were written, well known in the dancing circles.

“ MY TRUNK !

“ (*To Anne.*)

“ Have you heard, my dear Anne, how my spirits
are sunk ?

Have you heard of the cause ? Oh, the loss of my
Trunk !

From exertion or firmness I've never yet slunk ;
But my fortitude's gone with the loss of my *Trunk !*
Stout Lucy, my maid, is a damsel of spunk ;
Yet she weeps night and day for the loss of my *Trunk !*
I'd better turn nun, and coquet with a monk ;
For with whom can I flirt without aid from my *Trunk ?*

* * * *

Accurs'd be the thief, the old rascally hunks,
Who rifles the fair, and lays hands on their *Trunks !*
He who robs the King's stores of the least bit of junk,
Is hang'd—while he's safe who has plunder'd my
Trunk !

* * * *

There's a phrase amongst lawyers, when *nunc's* put
for *tunc* ;

But, tunc and nunc both, must I grieve for my *Trunk !*
Huge leaves of that great commentator, old Brunck,
Perhaps was the paper that lin'd my poor *Trunk !*

But my rhymes are all out!—for I dare not use
 st—k ;*
 'Twould shock Sheridan more than the loss of my
Trunk !"

From another of these trifles, (which, no doubt, produced much gaiety at the breakfast-table,) the following extracts will be sufficient :

" Muse, assist me to complain,
 While I grieve for Lady *Jane*.
 I ne'er was in so sad a vein,
 Deserted now by Lady *Jane*.

* * *

Lord Petre's house was built by Payne—
 No mortal architect made *Jane*.
 If hearts had windows, through the pane
 Of mine you'd see sweet Lady *Jane*.

* * *

At breakfast I could scarce refrain
 From tears at missing lovely *Jane* ;
 Nine rolls I eat, in hopes to gain
 The roll that might have fall'n to *Jane*," &c.

Another, written on a Mr. *Bigg*, contains some ludicrous couplets :—

* He had a particular horror of this word.

" I own he's not fam'd for a reel or a jig,
Tom Sheridan there surpasses Tom *Bigg*.
For, lam'd in one thigh, he is obliged to go zig-
Zag, like a crab—so no dancer is *Bigg*.
Those who think him a coxcomb, or call him a prig,
How little they know of the mind of my *Bigg* !
Tho' he ne'er can be mine, Hope will catch a twig—
Two deaths—and I yet may become Mrs. *Bigg*.
Oh give me, with him, but a cottage and pig,
And content I would live on beans, bacon, and *Bigg*."

Of a very different description are the following striking and spirited fragments, (which ought, perhaps, to have been introduced in a former part of this work,) written by him, apparently, about the year 1794, and addressed to Lord Howe and the other naval heroes of that period, to console them for the neglect they experienced from the Government, while ribands and titles were lavished on the Whig Sece-
ders :—

" Never mind them, brave black Dick,
Though they've play'd thee such a trick—
D—— their ribands and their garters,
Get you to your post and quarters.

Look upon the azure sea,
 There 's a sailor's taffety !
 Mark the Zodiac's radiant bow,
 That's a collar fit for HOWE !—
 And, than P—tl—d's brighter far,
 The Pole shall furnish you a Star ?*
 D—— their ribands and their garters,
 Get you to your post and quarters.
 Think, on what things are ribands shower'd—
 The two Sir Georges—Y—— and H—— !
 Look to what rubbish stars will stick,
 To Dicky H——n and Johnny D——k !
 Would it be for your country's good
 That you might pass for Alec. H——d.
 Or, perhaps,—and worse by half—
 To be mistaken for Sir R——h !
 Would you, like C——, pine with spleen,
 Because your bit of silk was green ?
 Would you, like C——, change your side,
 To have your silk new dipt and dyed ?—
 Like him, exclaim ' My riband's hue
 Was green—and now, by Heav'ns ! 'tis blue ;'
 And, like him—stain your honour too !

* This reminds us of a happy application which he
 made, upon a subsequent occasion, of two lines of
 Dryden :

" When men like Erskine go astray,
 The stars are more in fault than they."

D—— their ribands and their garters,
 Get you to your post and quarters,
 On the foes of Britain close,
 While B——k garters his Dutch hose,
 And cons, with spectacles on nose,
 (While to battle *you* advance,) *you*
 His ‘ *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* ’ ”

* * * *

SHERIDAN'S PERSON—JEU D'ESPRIT ON HIS HANDS.

When young, he was generally accounted handsome; but, in later years, his eyes were the only testimonials of beauty that remained to him. It was, indeed, in the upper part of his face that the Spirit of the man chiefly reigned; —the dominion of the world and the Senses being rather strongly marked out in the lower.* In his person, he was above the middle size, and his general make was robust and well

* Lord Byron has said the same thing of Sheridan, in a better manner: “The upper part of Sheridan's face was that of a god—a forehead most expansive, an eye of peculiar brilliancy and fire; but below he showed the satyr.”—*Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron.*

proportioned. It is remarkable that his arms, though of powerful strength, were thin, and appeared by no means muscular. His hands were small and delicate; and the following couplet, written on a cast from one of them, very livelily enumerates both its physical and moral qualities :

“ Good at a Fight, but better at a Play,
Godlike in Giving, but—the Devil to Pay !”

SHERIDAN'S HABITS OF COMPOSITION.

Among his habits, it may not be uninteresting to know that his hours of composition, as long as he continued to be an author, were at night, and that he required a profusion of lights around him while he wrote. Wine, too, was one of his favourite helps to inspiration ;—“ If the thought (he would say) is slow to come, a glass of good wine encourages it, and, when it *does* come, a glass of good wine rewards it.”

SHERIDAN'S EXTRAVAGANCE.

There cannot, indeed, be a stronger exemplification of the truth, that a want of regularity becomes, itself, a vice, from the manifold evils to which it leads, than the whole history of Mr. Sheridan's pecuniary transactions. So far from never paying his debts, as is often asserted of him, he was, in fact, always paying ;—but in such a careless and indiscriminate manner, and with so little justice to himself or others, as often to leave the respectable creditor to suffer for his patience, while the fraudulent dun was paid two or three times over. Never examining accounts nor referring to receipts, he seemed as if (in imitation of his own Charles, preferring generosity to justice,) he wished to make *paying* as like as possible to *giving*. Interest too, with its usual, silent accumulation, swelled every debt ; and several instances have been found among his accounts where the interest upon a small sum had been suffered to increase till it outgrew the principal :—“ *minima pars ipsa puella sui.*”

SHERIDAN'S IMPROVIDENCE.

His improvidence in every thing connected with money was most remarkable. He would frequently be obliged to stop on his journeys, for want of the means of getting on, and to remain living expensively at an inn, till a remittance could reach him. His letters to the treasurer of the theatre on these occasions were generally headed with the words, "Money-bound." A friend of his told Moore, that one morning, while waiting for him in his study, he cast his eyes over the heap of unopened letters that lay upon the table, and, seeing one or two with coronets on the seals, said to Mr. Westley, the treasurer, who was present, "I see we are all treated alike." Mr. Westley then informed him that he had once found, on looking over this table, a letter which he had himself sent, a few weeks before, to Mr. Sheridan, enclosing a ten-pound note, to release him from some inn, but which Sheridan, having raised the supplies in some other way, had never thought of opening.

The prudent treasurer took away the letter, and reserved the enclosure for some future exigence.

SHERIDAN'S INATTENTION TO LETTERS.

Among instances of his inattention to letters, the following is mentioned. Going one day to the banking-house, where he was accustomed to be paid his salary, as Receiver of Cornwall, and where they sometimes accommodated him with small sums before the regular time of payment, he asked, with all due humility, whether they could oblige him with the loan of twenty pounds. "Certainly, sir," said the clerk,—“would you like any more—fifty, or a hundred?” Sheridan, all smiles and gratitude, answered that a hundred pounds would be of the greatest convenience to him. “Perhaps, you will like to take two hundred, or three?” said the clerk. At every increase of the sum, the surprise of the borrower increased. “Have not you then received our letter?” said the clerk;—on which it turned out that, in consequence of the falling

in of some fine, a sum of twelve hundred pounds had been lately placed to the credit of the Receiver-General, and that, from not having opened the letter written to apprise him, he had been left in ignorance of his good luck.

When applied to by any creditor, he would give him one of these Shares, and allowing his claim entirely on his own showing, leave him to pay himself out of it, and refund the balance. Thus irregular at all times, even when most wishing to be right, he deprived honesty itself of its merit and advantages.

SHERIDAN'S AFFECTION FOR HIS FAMILY.

Long after his initiation into the gay and busy world, Richard Brinsley Sheridan retained in his vivid imagination a lively recollection of those calm and virtuous hours spent under his father's roof. Once after his marriage, upon occasion of his calling on the elder Mr. Sheridan, on business, his father happened to be absent, but his sister received him in the dining-

room where the cloth was laid. "Ah!" said he, "I could fancy myself back among old times, seated with Charles and my sisters at this table, and my father looking round upon us, and giving his favourite toast—"Heaths, hearts and homes!"

SHERIDAN AND WILBERFORCE.

One night coming very late out of a tavern, he fell, and being too much overtaken with liquor to recover his feet, he was raised by some passengers, who asked his name and place of abode, to which he replied by referring to a coffee-house, and hiccupping—"Gentlemen, I am not often in this way—my name is Wilberforce!"

SHERIDAN'S INTEMPERANCE.

A person going to hear the debates in the House of Commons, called at the Exchequer Coffee-house, where his attention was fixed by a gentleman taking tea with a parcel of papers

before him. Afterwards he called for a decanter of brandy, which he poured into a large glass, and drank off without diluting it in the least, and then walked away. The spectator soon followed, and went into the gallery of the house, where, to his astonishment, he heard one of the longest and most brilliant speeches he ever listened to delivered by this votary of Bacchus, who was no other than Mr. Sheridan.

SHERIDAN AND DAVIES'S LIFE OF GARRICK.

The last time I saw Mr. Sheridan, says Kelly, was in the room in Drury Lane, formerly the treasury of the old theatre, where a man of the name of Farebrother, an old servant of his, was allowed, by the Drury Lane Committee, to reside. He was sitting alone, reading, with a muffin and a cup of coffee before him. On my entering the room, he told me "that he had been reading Davies's Life of Garrick, which," said he, "if you have not read, do read, and advise every actor, from

me, to do the same, for it is well worth their attention."

SHERIDAN AND THE BOOTS.

Sheridan made his appearance one day in a pair of new boots—these attracting the notice of some of his friends, "Now guess," said he, "how I came by these boots?" Many *probable* guesses then took place—"No!" said Sheridan, "no, you've not hit it, nor ever will—I bought them, and paid for them!"

SHERIDAN'S STORY OF THE IRISH CHAIRMEN.

One day, says Kelly, Mr. Sheridan laughingly said to me, "It must be allowed, Kelly, that our countrymen always show more or less of the *potatoe* in their brain. Yesterday, at about four o'clock in the morning, I came out of Brookes's, where I had staid the very last; and, as I was stepping into the carriage, I saw some half-dozen Irish chairmen, loitering at the

door, shivering with cold, waiting for a fare. It was a bitter morning, and I said to one of the poor devils, 'Why do you remain here, my good fellow?'

" 'Please your honour,' replied one of them, 'we are waiting to take somebody home.'

" 'You may save yourselves the trouble then,' said I, 'for I have just come out of the house, and there is nobody left in it.'

" 'Please your honour, we know there is nobody in it, but who knows how many may come out.' "

"It was too cold," said Sheridan, "to argue with them, so I got into my coach, and left them."

SHERIDAN AND THE LAWYER.

Much *good* remains upon authentic record, relative to Mr. Sheridan, which even his greatest enemies could never deny. Some of the stories which exist against him, however, have a vast deal of humour in them, and one which

has often been told, says Kelly, I think worth inserting, because having been an eye-witness of the circumstance, I am enabled to show the very "head and front of his offending."

We were one day in earnest conversation close to the gate of the path, which was then open to the public, leading across the church-yard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, from King Street to Henrietta Street, when Mr. Holloway who was a creditor of Mr. Sheridan to a considerable amount, came up to us on horseback, and accosted Sheridan in a tone of something more like anger than sorrow, and complained that he never could get admittance when he called, vowing vengeance against the infernal Swiss Monsieur François, if he did not let him in the next time he went to Hertford Street.

Holloway was really in a passion. Sheridan knew that he was vain of his judgment in horse-flesh, and without taking any notice of the violence of his manner, burst into an exclamation upon the beauty of the horse which he rode,—he struck the right chord.

"Why," said Holloway, "I think I may say, there never was a prettier creature than this. You were speaking to me, when I last saw you, about a horse for Mrs. Sheridan; now this would be a treasure for a lady."

"Does he canter well?" said Sheridan.

"Beautifully," replied Holloway.

"If that's the case, Holloway," said Sheridan, "I really should not mind stretching a point for him. Will you have the kindness to let me see his paces?"

"To be sure," said the lawyer; and putting himself into a graceful attitude, he threw his nag into a canter along the market.

The moment his back was turned, Sheridan wished me good morning, and went off through the church-yard, where no horse could follow, into Bedford Street, laughing immoderately, as indeed did several standers-by. The only person not entertained by this practical joke was Mr. Holloway himself.

SHERIDAN'S PLAN FOR GETTING A GOLD
WATCH.

Another story of him Kelly gives, which is very little known, if known at all. Mr. Harris, the late proprietor of Covent Garden, who had a great regard for Sheridan, had at different times frequent occasions to meet him on business, and made appointment after appointment with him, not one of which Sheridan ever kept. At length Mr. Harris, wearied out, begged his friend Mr. Palmer, of Bath, to see Mr. Sheridan, and tell him that unless he kept the next appointment made for their meeting, all acquaintance between them must end for ever.

Sheridan expressed great sorrow for what had been in fact inevitable, and fixed one o'clock the next day to call upon Mr. Harris at the theatre. At about three he actually made his appearance in Hart Street, where he met Mr. Tregent, the celebrated French watch-maker, who was extremely theatrical, and had been the intimate friend of Garrick.

Sheridan told him, that he was on his way to call upon Harris.

"I have just left him," said Tregent, "in a violent passion, having waited for you ever since one o'clock."

"What have *you* been doing at the theatre?" said Sheridan.

"Why," replied Tregent; "Harris is going to make Bate Dudley a present of a gold watch, and I have taken him half a dozen, in order that he may choose one for that purpose."

"Indeed," said Sheridan.

They wished each other good day, and parted. Mr. Sheridan proceeded to Mr. Harris's room, and when he addressed him, it was pretty evident that his want of punctuality had produced the effect which Mr. Tregent described.

"Well, Sir," said Mr. Harris; "I have waited at least two hours for you again; I had almost given you up, and if——"

"Stop, my dear Harris," said Sheridan, interrupting him; "I assure you these things

occur more from my misfortunes than my faults; I declare I thought it was but one o'clock, for it so happens that I have no watch, and to tell you the truth, am too poor to buy one; but when the day comes that I can, you will see I shall be as punctual as any other man."

"Well, then," said the unsuspecting Harris; "if that be all, you shall not long want a watch, for here—(opening his drawer)—are half a dozen of Tregent's best—choose any one you like, and do me the favour of accepting it."

Sheridan affected the greatest surprise at the appearance of the watches; but did as he was bid, and selected certainly not the worst for the *cadeau*.

SHERIDAN AND RICHARDSON.

Mr. Sheridan was extremely attached to Mr. Richardson; and when Mrs. Sheridan was at Bognor, he used to take Richardson down with him on visits to her. One of these visits, says Kelly, Sheridan once described to me with in-

finite humour, and although I fear it is impossible to impart *literally*, the spirit which he *practically* infused into it, when relating it, I give it as I remember it.

Richardson had set his mind upon going down to Bognor with Mr. Sheridan on one particular occasion, because it happened that Lord Thurlow, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, was staying there. "So," said Richardson, "nothing can be more delightful ; what with my favourite diversion of sailing—my enjoyment of walking on the sands—the pleasure of arguing with Lord Thurlow, and taking my snuff by the sea side, I shall be in my glory."

"Well," said Mr. Sheridan ; "down he went full of anticipated joys. The first day, in stepping into the boat to go sailing, he tumbled down, and sprained his ankle, and was obliged to be carried into his lodgings, which had no view of the sea : the following morning he sent for a barber to shave him, but there being no professional shaver nearer than Chi-

chester, he was forced to put up with a fisherman, who volunteered to officiate, and cut him severely just under his nose, which entirely prevented his taking snuff; and the same day at breakfast, eating prawns too hastily, he swallowed the head of one, horns and all, which stuck in his throat, and produced such pain and inflammation, that his medical advisers would not allow him to speak for three days. So, thus," said Mr. Sheridan, "ended in four-and-twenty hours his walking—his sailing—his snuff-taking—and his arguments."

SHERIDAN'S SUPERSTITION.

Superstition often takes possession of the strongest minds. A more powerful instance of the truth of this cannot be cited than that of Mr. Sheridan. No mortal ever was more superstitious than he, as Kelly avers from his own knowledge. No power could prevail upon him to commence any business or set out upon a journey, on a Friday; nor would he allow, if

he possibly could avoid it, a piece to be produced at his theatre on a Friday night. It is a well-known fact (which he never denied), that when Tom Sheridan was under the tuition of Doctor Parr, in Warwickshire, his father dreamt that he fell from a tree in an orchard, and broke his neck. He took alarm, and sent for his boy to London, *instantanter*.

SHERIDAN'S OPINION OF THE NEWSPAPERS.

No man was ever more sore and frightened at criticism than he was, from his first outset in life. He dreaded the newspapers, and always courted their friendship. I have many times heard him say, "Let me but have the periodical Press on my side, and there should be nothing in this country which I would not accomplish."

SHERIDAN'S OPINION OF CONGREVE.

An observation Mr. Sheridan once made to me about Congreve's plays, says Kelly, I ven-

ture to repeat, it has so much genuine wit about it: he complained to me that "Love for Love" had been so much altered and modified for the more delicate ears of modern audiences, that it was quite spoiled. "His plays," said the wit, "are, I own, somewhat licentious, but it is barbarous to mangle them; they are like horses, when you deprive them of their vice, they lose their vigour."

SHERIDAN'S RETORT UPON BURKE.

It is of course known, that Mr. Burke, in the early part of his life, enlisted under the banners of Opposition, and was a constant frequenter of the house of a baker of the name of Tarcome, where the aspirants for fame, on that side of the question, used to meet, and debate certain proposed questions: the baker himself was eventually constituted perpetual president of the well-known Robin-Hood society; such was the estimation in which he was held by the disciples of Whiggery.

Upon a memorable occasion, Mr. Burke, in the House of Commons, exclaimed, "I quit the camp," and suddenly crossed the House, and having seated himself on the ministerial benches, shortly after rose, and made a most brilliant speech in opposition to his *ci-devant* friends and adherents.

Sheridan was a good deal nettled at what he considered a needless defection, and replied with something like asperity to Mr. Burke's attack, and concluded his speech with nearly these words: "The honourable gentleman, to quote his own expressions, has 'quitted the camp;' he will recollect that he quitted it as a deserter, and I sincerely hope he will never attempt to return as a spy: but I, for one, cannot sympathise in the astonishment with which an act of apostacy so flagrant has electrified the House; for neither I, nor the honourable gentleman, have forgotten whence he obtained the weapons which he now uses against us: so far from being at all astonished at the

honourable gentleman's tergiversation, I consider it not only characteristic but consistent, that he who in the outset of life made so extraordinary a blunder as to go to a baker's for eloquence, should finish such a career by coming to the House of Commons to get bread."

SHERIDAN'S LOVE OF INVENTING BULLS.

One of Mr. Sheridan's favourite amusements, in his hours of recreation, says Kelly, was that of making blunders for me, and relating them to my friends, vouching for the truth of them with the most perfect gravity. One I remember was, that, one night, when Drury Lane Theatre was crowded to excess in every part, I was peeping through the hole in the stage curtain, and John Kemble, who was standing on the stage near me, asked me how the house looked, and that I replied, "By J—s, you can't stick a pin's head in any part of it—it is literally chuck full; but how much fuller will it be to-morrow night, when the King comes!"

Another of Mr. Sheridan's jests against me was, that, one day, having walked with him to Kemble's house, in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, when the streets were very dirty, and having gone up the steps while Mr. Sheridan was scraping the dirt off his shoes, I asked him to scrape for me while I was knocking at the door.

SHERIDAN'S ADMIRATION OF DRYDEN.

Of all our poets, Dryden was Mr. Sheridan's favourite; many a time and oft, says Kelly, when sitting over our wine, have I heard him quote at great length from him. It was truly a treat to hear him recite poetry; he had a powerful voice, and nothing, when animated, could surpass the brilliancy of his countenance, and the fire of his eye.

SHERIDAN AND HIS SON TOM.

In a large party, one evening, the conversation turned upon young men's allowance at

College. Tom Sheridan lamented the ill judging parsimony of many parents, in that respect. "I am sure, Tom," said his father, "you need not complain; I always allowed you eight hundred a year." "Yes, father, I must confess you *allowed* it; but then it was never paid."

SHERIDAN AND LORD GUILFORD.

Just after Sheridan had taken a new house, he met Lord Guilford, to whom he said, "Well, all will go now on like clock-work." "Ay," said his Lordship, "tick, tick!"

BONS MOTS BY SHERIDAN.

His best *bon mots* are in the memory of every one. Among those less known, perhaps, is his answer to General T——, relative to some difference of opinion between them on the war in Spain: "Well, T——, are you still on your high horse?" "If I was on a horse before, I am on an elephant now." "No, T——, you

were upon an ass before, and now you are upon a mule."

When some one told him that the quantity of wine, brandy, &c. which he drank, would destroy the coat of his stomach, he replied, "Well, then, my stomach must just digest in its waistcoat."

Tom Sheridan, on one occasion, told his father that he intended going down into a coal-mine. "You run the risk of breaking your neck, sir," said Sheridan, "and for what?" "Oh," said Tom, "merely to have the pleasure of saying I have seen a coal-mine." "And why, you blockhead, can't you have that pleasure without going into one? why can't you *say* you have seen a mine, without the chance of breaking your neck?"

Mr. Rogers and Mr. Sheridan were conversing on the actors. "Your admiration of Mrs. Siddons is so high," said Rogers, "that I

wonder you never made open love to her.”
“To her!” said Sheridan; “to that magnificent and appalling creature; I should as soon have thought of making love to the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

“Why do we honour ambition, and despise avarice, while they are both but the desire of possession?”—“Because,” said Sheridan, “the one is natural, the other artificial; the one the sign of mental health, the other of mental decay; the one appetite, the other disease.”

Sheridan, lounging towards Whitehall, met the late George Rose coming out of St. Margaret’s.—“Any mischief on foot, George, that you have been at church?”—“No; I have been getting my son christened: I have called him William Pitt.”—“William Pitt!”

————— A rose

By any other name would smell as sweet,
said Sheridan.

Sheridan used to say, that the life of a manager was like the life of the ordinary of Newgate,—a constant superintendence of executions. The number of authors whom he was forced to extinguish, was, he said, “a perpetual literary massacre, that made St. Bartholomew’s altogether shrink in comparison. Play-writing, singly, accounted for the employment of that immense multitude, who drain away obscure years beside the inkstand, and haunt the streets with iron-moulded visages, and study-coloured clothes. It singly accounted for the rise of paper, which had exhausted the rags of England and Scotland, and had almost stripped off the last covering of Ireland. He had counted plays until calculation sank under the number; and every rejected play of them all seemed, like the clothes of a Spanish beggar, to turn into a living, restless, merciless, indefatigable progeny.”

The ——— of ———, since dead, was remarkable for his reluctance to contribute to public institutions. He was at length prevailed on to attend a charity sermon in Westminster. After the sermon, the plate was handed round the vestry. Fox and Sheridan were present. "The Doctor has absolutely given his pound," said Fox.—"Then," said Sheridan, "he must think that he is going to die."—"Poh!" replied Fox, "even Judas threw away twice the money."—"Yes," said Sheridan; "but how long was it before he was hanged?"

Sir John Cox Hippisley, who had been Envoy for some years at an Italian court, occupied himself, on his return to Parliament, chiefly with the Catholic question. On this subject he was remarkable for supporting his speeches with documents of the dryest and most antiquated species. "I never hear that man speak," said a leader of the opposition, "that I don't think

I hear the ghost of some old Pope." "Ay," said Sheridan, "of Pope Joan."

A drama was presented to Sheridan, in which the characters amounted to no less than fifty-six. "What's this?" said Sheridan; "the new army list?"—"Nothing of the kind, Sir," said the introducer; "it is on an Irish story, and by an Irishman." Sheridan glanced over a few leaves, and saw it was altogether inadmissible "Tell my countryman," said he, "that as a drama, there can be no hope of its success, partly owing to the reduced population of London; but it might turn into a history of the Rebellion, and the list at the beginning would do for the muster at the levy *en masse*."

"Why," said the late Lady Argyle to Sheridan, "do our young men of birth persist in dressing, looking, and talking like boxers, grooms, and coachmen?"—"My dear madam,

I never had a turn for family secrets," replied Sheridan; "but I suspect *birth* to be the general cause."

It was observed as a remarkable fact, "that in foreign countries, women guilty of public crimes were much seldomer punished than in England."—"The reason is to be found," said Sheridan, "in another remarkable fact,—that in England, justice has but *hands*; on the Continent she also has *arms*."

Sheridan was dining at Peter Moore's with his son Tom, who was at that time in a very nervous debilitated state. The servant, in passing quickly between the guests and the fire-place, struck down the plate-warmer. This made a great noise, and caused Tom Sheridan to start and tremble. Peter Moore, provoked at this, rebuked the servant, and added, 'I suppose you have broken all the plates?'—"No,

Sir," said the servant, "not one."—"No!" exclaimed Sheridan; "then, damn it! you have made all that noise for nothing."

SHERIDAN AND THE MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH.

The Margravine of Anspach says of Sheridan in her amusing *Memoirs*, "Sheridan struggled up-hill, but he had the support of Fox: I was never very partial to him, though he courted my society much through his wife. Under pretence of writing an Epilogue for my play in three acts, of "The Miniature Picture," which was first performed at the Town-Hall at Newbury, for the benefit of the poor, he borrowed it of me, and brought it out against my will at Drury Lane, where it was acted for three nights: yet, enraged as I was, by the persuasion of Lord Orford and the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Aylesbury, in whose box I sat, I went to its last representation. I was very angry with him for it, and kept up my resentment, till he made me laugh,

one night, in a crowd coming out of the Opera House. We were squeezed near one another by chance, and he said, "For God's sake! Lady Craven, don't tell any body I am a thief, for you know very well, if you do, every body will believe it!"

SHERIDAN'S HOAX ON THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

When Mr. Moore was ascribing hoaxes to Sheridan, he might as well have recorded one which was pleasant without being mischievous. Lord Belgrave (now the Earl of Grosvenor) having clenched a speech in the House of Commons with a long Greek quotation, Sheridan, in reply, admitted the force of the quotation so far as it went, "but," said he, "had the noble lord proceeded a little further and completed the passage, he would have seen that it applied the other way." Sheridan then spouted something, *ore rotundo*, which had all the ais, ois, ous, kon and koss that give the world assurance of a Greek quotation; upon which Lord Bel-

grave very promptly and handsomely complimented the honourable member on his readiness of recollection, and frankly admitted that the continuation of the passage had the tendency ascribed to it by Mr. Sheridan, and that he had overlooked it at the moment when he gave his quotation. On the breaking up of the house, Fox, who piqued himself on having some Greek, went up to Sheridan and asked him, "Sheridan, how came you to be so ready with that passage? It certainly is as you say, but I was not aware of it before you quoted it." It is unnecessary to observe that there was no Greek at all in Sheridan's *impromptu*.

SHERIDAN AND THE OXFORD INSTALLATION.

At the Duke of Portland's installation at Oxford, Sheridan was refused academical honours, (although every interest was used with the University,) because he had been upon the stage. That learned body could not be induced to deviate from their laws, however great the

talents of the man who was desirous of obtaining a degree. Burke was admitted by them at that time.

SHERIDAN'S WANT OF FEELING FOR NATURAL
SCENERY.

Sheridan had no feeling for natural scenery, nor is there a trace of such a sentiment discoverable through his poetry. In corroboration of this remark, Mr. Moore quotes the following passage of a letter written by a very eminent person, whose name all lovers of the picturesque associate with their best enjoyment of its beauties :—

“ At one time I saw a good deal of Sheridan—he and his first wife passed some time here, and he is an instance that a taste for poetry and for scenery are not always united. Had this house been in the midst of Hounslow Heath, he could not have taken less interest in all around it : his delight was in shooting, all and every day, and my game-keeper said that, of all the

gentlemen he had ever been out with, he never knew so bad a shot."

SHERIDAN'S READY RESOURCES.

The versatility of his character was surprising, and his resources in difficulties perhaps unparalleled. In the midst of his distresses, he had one day invited a party of friends to dine with him, amongst whom were a few noblemen of the Opposition party; but, upon examining his cellar, a terrible deficiency was found. He was largely in debt to Chalier, the great wine-merchant, and for two years had been unable to obtain from him any farther credit. He put his imagination to work, and tried the following expedient:—He sent for Chalier on the day of the dinner in question, and told him, that luckily he was just in cash, and had desired to settle his account. Chalier was much pleased; but told him, as he had it not about him, he would return home and bring it with him. He was about to leave the room, when, as if upon a sudden

recollection, Sheridan said, " Oh ! Chalier, by the by, you must stop and dine with me to-day ; I have a party to whom I will introduce you,—some leading members of both Houses." Chalier, who was fond of great company, and also hoped to meet with a recommendation, was obliged to Sheridan for the offer, and promised to be with him at the hour of dinner. Upon his return home, he informed the clerk of his cellars, that he was going to dine with Mr. Sheridan, and probably should not be home till it was late. Sheridan had fixed the hour at six to Chalier, but desired him to come before that time, as he had much to say to him in private. At about five o'clock Chalier came to his appointment ; and he was no sooner in the house, than Sheridan sent off a servant with a note to the clerk, desiring him, as Mr. Chalier was favouring him with his company, to send as soon as possible three dozen of Burgundy, two dozen of claret, and two dozen of port, with a dozen of old hock. The clerk, knowing that

his master was really at Sheridan's, and thinking that the order came with his concurrence, immediately obeyed it. After dinner, every body praised the fine qualities of Sheridan's wines, and all were desirous of knowing who was his wine-merchant. Sheridan, turning towards Chalier, said, "I am indebted to my friend here for all the wine you have tasted, and am always proud to recommend him." Next morning Chalier discovered the trick, but I never heard whether he admired the adroitness of his customer.

The following is another instance of the same kind:—an innkeeper at Richmond had some excellent Burgundy, of which Sheridan ordered two dozen, at 8*l.* a dozen. The innkeeper sent him this quantity; and Sheridan shortly after assured him, he liked the wine so much, that he would purchase the remainder. Boniface had no objection to sell the wine—but he insisted upon being paid for the first parcel before he sent out a second. This Sheridan promised to

do, if Boniface would call on a particular day at his house, in Bruton-street. Boniface was punctual; and as soon as Sheridan had him in the house, he ordered his carriage and set off at full speed for Richmond. On his arrival there, the wife of the innkeeper cried out—"Oh! Mr. Sheridan, how unlucky! my husband is just gone to town in search of you, and you have missed each other."—"Oh no," said Sheridan; "I have seen your husband, my good woman, and we have arranged every thing: so, you have only to get me the rest of the Burgundy, and have it packed up immediately, that I may take it to town with me; for I have some friends to dine with me to-day, and can't wait." Mrs. Boniface packed up the wine, and had it put into Sheridan's carriage, who returned to town about the same time that the innkeeper arrived at Richmond, where he learned the fate at once of his bill and his Burgundy.

The following anecdote serves to illustrate still farther that extraordinary talent for out-

witting others, in which he prided himself so much :—" Mr. Sheridan used to keep his carriage at the livery-stables of one Edbrooke, in Clarges-street, from whom he also hired his horses for the season. Pushed as he always was for money, it is not wonderful that the stabler should be no better off than the rest of those who had the honour of serving Mr. Sheridan ; on the contrary, his bill had run long, and amounted to several hundreds. Edbrooke, who was an easy sort of man, had applied to him, time out of mind, but all to no purpose. Sheridan would frequently, to get quit of his importunities, give him a whole sheet of letter-paper, filled with blank orders for Drury-Lane theatre. By these means, and his insinuating manners, he found it no very difficult matter in putting him off. However, Mr. Edbrooke had a wife, who was in this instance a much better manager than her husband ; for, although she never failed to make use of the orders, she, at the same time, never failed, when an opportunity offered, of dunning

Sheridan for her husband's bill. It so happened that the post-horse duty was to be paid, and the couple were sadly perplexed how to raise the money. Whilst the two were holding a consultation as to how the *needful* was to be raised, Sheridan sent for his carriage. My landlady, who heard the call of the ostler in the yard, determined to take the reins out of her lord's hands, and desired the coachman to tell his master, that, unless he would pay up the last quarter's keep, he should neither have coach or horses. The coachman grumbled, but she was inexorable: so away he went and delivered his ungracious message. Sheridan, who knew well what sort of a lady he had to deal with, despatched *coachee* again, with his respects to Mrs. Edbrooke, and begging she would allow his coachman to drive her to his house, and telling her that every thing should be settled. The coachman returned to Clarges-street, and made known his master's pleasure. Mrs. Edbrooke, who considered herself a match for Sheridan,

determined to follow it up, and accordingly ordered the horses to be put to Sheridan's carriage, and she was driven to his house. When she arrived there, she was shown up stairs to his library, where it appeared he was going to have lunch, a cold fowl and wine being on the table. The servant desired her to take a seat and a glass of wine, while his master was engaged in the next room with a gentleman. No sooner had she sat down, than Sheridan slipped down stairs, jumped into his carriage, and was off to Wimbledon, where he had agreed to pass the day. Meantime Mrs. Edbrooke was quietly enjoying a glass of Madeira, little dreaming how she was outwitted; and it was not until tired of waiting, and after having finished the leg and part of the breast of the fowl, that she was made acquainted with the trick that had been played upon her. Poor woman! she retired in a sad humour. However, to make her amends for her mortification and disappointment, Sheridan next morning sent her a check for her bill."

SUPPLEMENTARY ANECDOTES.

Mr. Moore has shown, in his life of Sheridan, a considerable acquaintance with the operations of the human mind, and evidently knows the great value of marking, in the progress of his work, the ebb and flow of those characteristic traits, which are usually termed "parts of the natural disposition." The leading principal trait, noticed by Mr. Moore, in Sheridan's character is,—*kindness of feeling*. There are several circumstances incidentally mentioned by this last biographer, in some degree illustrating his position. He would have made his work more attractive, and more philosophical, if he had watched with care, and dwelt on, with emphasis, the fluctuations of the more marked

and leading features of his mind, as they were sometimes partially displayed, at other times lost for a season in the vortex of success, or when whelmed by the tide of ambition, struggling for existence amid the stormy seas of passion, or faintly proving their existence when the blasts of adversity threatened to freeze up the natural current at its very source.

The following circumstance, (occurring near the close of his life, when he had tasted of the bitterness of disappointment, and must have been fully convinced, that the course he had pursued was not one which carried with it increasing satisfaction and peace of mind) finely and powerfully shows, that this natural kindness of feeling re-appeared amid the stormy evening of his days, and shed a sun-like beam over his shaded and melancholy passage to the tomb.

Mr. Moore understood the value of the following communication, and thus acknowledged it:—

“ I feel much indebted for the very interesting anecdote of Mr. Sheridan, which you have been so good as to communicate to me, and which I cannot possibly give better than (if you will allow me) in your own words.”

It is supposed, from the length of time which elapsed between the communication and the publication of Mr. Moore's work, that the circumstance had escaped his memory, or it would not have been omitted.

The following is a transcription of the rough copy of the letter to Mr. Moore:—

“ Some time since, when in conversation with Mr. Charles Sheridan, I learnt that you were compiling memoirs of his father, I mentioned to him a trait in his father's life which it was our mutual opinion should not be permitted to pass unnoticed ; and on my asking him a few days ago, if he objected to my communicating to you the particulars of the transaction, he expressed a wish, that I should do so. Therefore, trusting that you will esteem his

permission a sufficient apology for addressing you, to whom I am unknown, I shall, in as concise a manner as possible, narrate the circumstance.

“Early in the summer of 1815, Mr. Sheridan took me with him to Leatherhead, near which place he had an estate called Polesden. During the few days we remained there, he rose early, and, after breakfast, proceeded in his barouche to his estate, over a portion of which he walked each day, making minute inquiries relating to his affairs, about which he seemed very anxious. After having completed his inquiries for the day, he dismissed his attendants, and reclining on the grass beneath some favourite tree, he partook of refreshments which we had provided. It was in one of the walks, when approaching a neat farm-house, he said to me, ‘the inhabitant of that house is a man ‘whose bread has been dipped in tears,’ but I trust, that the assistance I have given him, united with his own industry, will extricate

him from his difficulties, and enable him to provide for his family.' On our entering the wicket, near which several little children were at play, he was recognized by them, and they shouted with one voice, as they ran towards their home, 'Here's Mr. Sheridan!' In an instant, a venerable looking old man, his son, a man of about fifty, the father of the numerous offspring before-mentioned, and his wife, came to the door, and with looks of joy saluted him. We entered the dwelling. Mr. Sheridan being seated, inquired after the health of the family, the state of the crops on the farm, and the probability he had of success. From the answers of the man, I easily discovered that Mr. Sheridan was well acquainted with his affairs, and had interested himself deeply for him. The wife, with tears of gratitude, said—'You saved us from ruin and famine, and may my children live to pray for you.' I saw that he was affected, but commanding himself, he begged to have some conversation with the hus-

band, and retired with him to an adjoining apartment.

“ In his absence, the wife informed me, that her husband had been industrious but unfortunate, and, that failing to pay the rent of a farm belonging to a neighbouring landholder, his goods had been distrained, and his aged father and nine young children turned out into the world to seek some other home: that Mr. Sheridan, hearing of their distress, and assuring himself that misfortune alone had brought her husband to so forlorn a state, had purchased many articles necessary to their comfort, and put them into the farm which they then tenanted, free from rent for one year, and had advanced them a little money to begin with.

“ Mr. Sheridan returned; and, on leaving the house, was followed by this family, who, with tears of gratitude, and enthusiastic prayers, called down the blessings of heaven upon his head. When ‘ the cry of the poor and the fatherless and him that had none to help him, and

the blessings of those who were ready to perish came upon him,' his feelings were overcome; he burst into tears and hurried away.

“ The same evening he corroborated the statement of the woman, and charged me to tell no one. But I feel myself now called on to make known this deed, and am assured, that it cannot be in better hands than your own. In the above recital I have not exaggerated, but simply adhered to the facts, which made a deep impression on my mind. I have only now to say, that a sincere affection for Mr. Sheridan, alone induces me to communicate this to you, and that I have no wish that my name should be mentioned.

“ I remain, &c.

“ N. O.”

“ To Thomas Moore, Esq.
&c. &c. &c.”

SHERIDAN'S PUNISHMENT OF A YOUNG EGOTIST.

A numerous party was assembled at the mansion of a Northern Squire. Among them was Sheridan and a young wealthy heir belonging to a neighbouring county. This youth prided himself on the accident of his birth, and on his consequent acquisition of riches. During the early part of the day, the stripling sneered at poverty, and spoke slightly of authors, actors, and other classes of the community who afford occupation and amusement to thousands who would otherwise be devoured by *ennui*, or seek excitement in vicious pleasures. Sheridan was justly displeased at the want of tact, taste, and feeling in the rich young man, and waited for an opportunity of making him feel the edge of his keen rebuke. At dinner were twenty guests: Sheridan sat on the left hand, at the bottom of the table; the youth on the right, at the top; so that they were at opposite

angles; and the whole party were so placed as to witness and hear what passed from either of them. The youth talked much of all that concerned him; he gave accounts of the wonderful leaping of his favourite hunter; of the distance his new double-barrelled gun killed a wild duck; of the extraordinary staunchness of a cross-bred setter; of his dexterity in catching a salmon with a single hair; of his prowess in London, &c. &c. to the number of eighteen different circumstances. After the removal of the second course, silence ensued. Sheridan availed himself of the moment, and thus addressed the youth—his voice ensuring a continuation of the prevailing silence—“Sir, from the distance at which I sit from you, I did not hear with accuracy the whole of your interesting anecdotes; permit me to ask you—whose hunter performed those extraordinary leaps?” The youth replied: “Mine, Sir.” Sheridan continued, “But whose gun killed so far?” Again the youth answered—“Mine, Sir.”

“ Whose setter was so staunch ?” “ Mine, Sir,” repeated the victim.—“ Who caught the salmon, Sir ?” “ I did,” was faintly answered. Sheridan was inexorable, and continued with the utmost politeness of manner until he had exhausted the whole eighteen items ; and then drily said,—“ So you were the chief *actor* in every anecdote, and the *author* of them all.—Is it not impolitic to despise your own professions.” The youth left the mansion on the following day, and was cured of his illiberality and egotism.

SHERIDAN, THE KING, AND THE “ DELICATE INVESTIGATION.”

His Majesty, when Regent, was deeply agitated when the investigation on the conduct of his consort was entered into, and required the advice and assistance of his most able friends. One morning, when finishing his toilet, he despatched a confidential person for Sheridan, who soon obeyed the summons. On his entering

the room, the Regent, with concern and much agitation, said ; “ Sheridan, how is this ? you have not surely deserted me on this most trying occasion. I want your advice and assistance.” What Sheridan’s opinion was of this affair, we have no means of ascertaining ; but must admit, that his Royal Master’s situation was trying in the extreme. Sheridan bowed, and replied ; “ Your Royal Highness honours me—but, I will never take part against a woman, whether she be right or wrong.” This was one of the causes of the defection in their friendship.

SHERIDAN’S FISHING.

There runs across the bottom of the lower garden of the Deanery at Winchester, a remarkably clear, shallow, and rapid stream. Nothing would suit Sheridan but dragging this clear water, in which the smallest minnow could not have escaped detection. Nets were procured, and he entered eagerly on the task,

affirming that jack and trout must abound in so retired a place, and in such pellucid water. A wag of the party slipped away, and purchased six pickled herrings, and, as the stream passed beneath an archway, contrived, without being seen, to let the herrings flow down the stream into the net. Sheridan perceived them, and was so delighted as to forget his antipathy to cold water, and waded into the stream: he pulled, and hallooed, and gave way to as great joy as a boy at the death of the first pheasant he ever fired at—he grappled the bag of the net, and seized the fish, while the wags looked on with ill-suppressed laughter. On his discovering the trick, he was hailed with a loud shout: he joined in the joke, and simply remarked, when he looked alternately on his dripping garments and at the herrings, “This is a pretty pickle.”

SHERIDAN'S CONDUCT ON LOSING HIS FAVOURITE
HORSE.

Sheridan had a horse, of which he was unusually fond, stolen from a pasture. At first,

the strictest search was made for the animal, and a hue-and-cry was raised to try and detect the thief; Sheridan, moreover, was evidently very seriously vexed at the loss of his horse, and inveighed bitterly against the police and the robber. After a few days, he said no more on the subject, but the reward he had offered for the recovery of the animal stimulated some one to trace the thief, and the person came to him, and informed him of the name of the man who had sold the horse, and the place where he was to be found. Sheridan rewarded the informant, and dismissed him. A short time afterwards, a relation remarked to him, "Sheridan, you deserve to lose your property; and you will become a beggar if you are not more careful of it; the man who stole your horse is known, and yet you refuse to prosecute him: it is encouraging people to plunder you." Sheridan calmly answered, "It is true the man is known, but consider, he is only a poor schoolmaster who was in

debt, and in danger of being caught by bailiffs, from whom he attempted to escape, and you know it was very natural for him to prefer riding away, to running away from them.”—“ Ah,” retorted his relative, “ I see that a fellow feeling makes you wondrous kind.”

SHERIDAN AND HIS PIGS.

The following evinces the kindness of Sheridan's feelings, even more conspicuously than the preceding anecdote. Sheridan once had a fine Chinese sow and nine farrow presented to him. The novelty of the possession amused him, and he, for some days, fed and caressed the whole family with the greatest tenderness. One morning, the mother and her little pigs were missing; every field was searched, the lanes examined, and inquiries made of every passenger, but no tidings were gained of the family. On this occasion, his anger was kindled, and he declared that the culprit should suffer the utmost penalty of the law.

However, as on the former occasion, he allowed his anger to subside as soon as the plunderer was detected. The same relation again attacked him, and remonstrated on the weakness and impropriety of allowing such offenders to escape the punishment they so richly deserved. Sheridan, with equal temper, replied, "The man who stole the sow and my nine darling pigs, was wretchedly poor; indeed, I heard that his wife and nine children were in actual want, so it is no wonder that he should take the pigs; besides, after all, it was but one a-piece!"

AN INSTANCE OF SHERIDAN'S HONOURABLE MANNER OF PAYING DEBTS.

Much has been said and written on Sheridan's incorrect conduct relating to pecuniary transactions. No one would affirm, that he was punctual or precise in his payments, and had that love of money and regularity to keep an account book, and insert every sixpence

he paid away. We must not hastily adopt the crude opinions of the hearsay babbler, but refer to FACTS. Sheridan had a considerable income, for he was the receiver-general of the duchy of Cornwall, possessed a valuable property called Polesden, and held certain shares in the Drury-Lane Theatre. He was careless of money, but not expensive in his habits, and no instance has been produced of any profligate expenditure. Sheridan's debts have been proved not to exceed five thousand pounds, a sum which a man of his income might owe without incurring the virulent abuse that has been uttered against him.

Every man has his weaknesses: Sir Isaac Newton once studied astrology; and Lord Bacon was a professor of alchemy: Sheridan's weakness was a desire to outwit every body with whom he transacted business of any kind, and even to obtain by stratagem what might have been as easily procured by simple methods. When thus pursuing this deplorable

propensity, he had no intention of defrauding or injuring : but another lamentable failing often gave to his actions that appearance—his *procrastination*. When he obtained wine from Mr. Chaliar, or Boniface, or got his carriage from the livery stable, he had no intention of injuring or defrauding the parties, but merely amused himself, indulged his weakness, and gained his end with the intention of paying for all he had ; and which, in these instances, we have every reason to believe, that even his procrastination did not prevent him from doing. It is right that mankind, in all pecuniary transactions, should act on general grounds ; but the charitable and philosophical will make many allowances for failings and peculiarities in their estimate of the characters of others. Sheridan's character, properly illustrated, would form a striking and useful example, and would not detract from his future fame.

The circumstance to which these remarks form the introduction, is as follows. Sheridan

once lived at Wanstead, in a house belonging to the late Mr. Bowles, and there contracted debts with the butchers, bakers, and other tradesmen. When the time for liquidating these debts arrived, he had, as usual, spent what he ought to have retained for that purpose, and it was vain that these traders applied to him. He left the place, but two years afterwards returned, and summoned all his creditors. They came quickly, but without much expectation of getting any thing but witticisms and promises. To their great surprise, he produced their accounts, and paid to each, not only the amount of his bill, but the compound interest on it, and something more for the loss of the mercantile use of the money..

SHERIDAN AND LORD THURLOW.

Sheridan was dining with the black-browed Chancellor, when he produced some admirable Constantia, which had been sent him from the Cape of Good Hope. The wine tickled the

palate of Sheridan, who saw the bottle emptied with uncommon regret, and set his wits to work to get another. The old Chancellor was not to be so easily induced to produce his curious Cape in such profusion, and foiled all Sheridan's attempts to get another glass. Sheridan being piqued, and seeing the inutility of persecuting the immoveable pillar of the law, turned towards a gentleman sitting farther down, and said, "Sir, pass me up that decanter, for I must return to Madeira since I cannot double the Cape."

SHERIDAN APPLIED TO TO ALTER THE SUCCESSION
TO THE THRONE OF ENGLAND.

In the summer of 1815, Sheridan was amused by the arrival of numerous letters from an unfortunate individual labouring under mental delusion, and who had just reached England from the East Indies. Knowing that all reasoning and expostulation would be useless, he answered the poor man's letters in an ambi-

guous manner, and, at last, terminated the correspondence by a promise which, of course, he could never fulfil. While copies are given from the original letters, it is thought safer to omit the names, lest the individual should yet be living, and no longer in the same unfortunate condition.

“Royal Hotel, Plymouth,

“June 22nd, 1815.

“Sir,

“I have the pleasure to inform you, of my having landed here yesterday from the Honourable Company’s ship ———, and of my firm resolution of prosecuting my just claims to the Crown. I calculated on being in the Downs on the 23rd, and addressed a letter to you dated from thence.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“JONATHAN BURKE.

“Prince of Scotland and of Great Britain and Ireland. Rex de Jure.

“Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan, London.”

CIRCULARÆ.

“ Sir,

“ Although in a very infirm state of health, in consequence of the cruelties exercised towards me, and the infernal doses administered to me at South Wales, and my subsequent long confinement of two years and a half in the General Insane Hospital, in the hope of intimidating me, where I was fed on provisions such as no honest man in England would feed his dog with, I am now placed, under the paltry plea of being a pauper, a charter party passenger, on board this ship, by those time-serving satellites, of that illustrious, unfeeling usurper, the Prince of Wales, the Earl of Moira, General Sir George Nugent, Bart. and Mr. Udney, President of the Marine Board, whose mother has dry-nursed the is-to-be Princess of Orange; but their infamous conduct shall not have the desired effect; and I trust in God they will all have cause to repent, for, as a lawyer, I have long known that when

the heirdom *per stirpes* takes place, that the heirdom *per capita* must give way, and every intelligent man who knows me must be aware, that, although the son of an Irish snuff and tobacco seller, I am the lineal descendant of James, Earl of Bothwell, Duke of Orkneys, and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, the great grand-daughter of Henry VII. of England, in the line of his daughter Margaret, the wife of James IV. of Scotland, consequently the rightful heir to the Crown of England, on the demise of George III., an event which I have good reason to suppose has already taken place.

“ I am, Sir, yours, &c.

“ Prince of Scotland, &c.”

“ To the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan.”

Sheridan at length promised this poor fellow to consult with his Royal Highness the Prince Regent on the matter, and let him know the result of the interview.

SHERIDAN AND HIS WILL.

Sheridan was very desirous that his son Tom should marry a young woman of large fortune, who was evidently enamoured of him, but knew that the beautiful and excellent Miss Caroline Callander had won his son's heart. One day, he requested Tom to walk with him, and soon entered on the subject of his marriage, and pointed out to him in glowing colours the advantages of so brilliant an alliance. Tom listened with the utmost patience, and then descanted on the perfections of the woman who proved the pride and solace of his declining years. Sheridan grew warm, and expatiating on the folly of his son, at length exclaimed—"Tom, if you marry Caroline Callander, I'll cut you off with a shilling!" Tom could not resist the opportunity of replying, and looking archly at his father, said—"Then, Sir, you must borrow it." Sheridan was tickled at the wit, and dropped the subject. The future proved how correctly Tom had judged.

SHERIDAN AND THE BAILIFF.

That many unjust demands were made on Sheridan is fully established, by the amount of his debts, when proofs of their correctness were required after his death. His irregularity too frequently prevented him from producing documents to prove such demands fraudulent, though there are instances on record in which this happened.

Sheridan one day met a young friend, and requested him to dine with him. The invitation was gladly accepted, and at six the party assembled ; consisting of Sheridan, a queer-looking man, and his young friend. No sooner was the dinner served, than this queer personage examined the dishes, stirred up the sauces, and looked as if he would at that moment have preferred eating to a diadem. The youth was surprised, more particularly as he had been told by Sheridan that the other guest was a most intimate friend of his : the manner of the

man led him at first to conclude that he was a gourmand, and a man of such transcendent abilities as to be tolerated in spite of his barbarous breeding; and he sat in expectation of hearing corruscations of wit, and of gathering a harvest of knowledge as soon as he began to talk. Sheridan treated him with marked politeness, helped him to a profusion of fish, asked his opinion of the sauces, complimented him on his knowledge of "*la cuisine*," drank wine with him repeatedly, and appeared to become gradually more charmed with his society. The youth sat looking on in mute astonishment, while the man ate like a hungry drover, clipped and coined the English tongue, and repeatedly uttered such base coin, that he was fully satisfied of his being an uneducated man; and so conjectured that he might be a great natural genius. Sheridan helped him to enormous pieces of beef, and plied him with wine, until the fellow's eyes glistened, and his tongue moved faster than his fork. He then began to

speak of the poetical works of Sir Walter Scott: Sheridan was all attention, and as the man gave his opinions on several of them, Sheridan appeared delighted, and, contrary to his custom, interrupted him with a high encomium on his taste; and then permitted the man to resume the conversation. Never was a being so near a state of ecstasy as this: he reiterated his opinions, and repeated, in the manner of the *mummers*, various passages. Sheridan kept his countenance, and thus addressed him:—"Sir, I am unable to express the pleasure I feel at seeing a man, whose judgment, untrammelled by the narrow prejudices of the world, has pointed out to him the superiority of our modern poets, and whose refined taste has selected the most beautiful portions—and, let me add, whose manner of reciting them adds new lustre to their beauties."

The man was enchanted, drank bumpers to the "Poeters of England," declared Sheridan to be the greatest of human geniuses, and pro-

nounced the man who offended him, an enemy to his country. Sheridan had drunk with moderation, kept his countenance, and acted up to the man, without ever going beyond the word which was necessary to retain his guest in this state of delusion.

The repetitions continued with deep potations, interspersed with remarks of a heterogeneous order ; to all of which Sheridan attended, and replied, sometimes appealing to his young friend, who had long before perceived what was going on, and therefore invariably accorded in opinion. The quantity of wine the man had swallowed began to cloud his intellects, and to make his eye-balls roll. No sooner did Sheridan perceive this, than he redoubled his energy, held high his glass, and proposed a song ; the man pledged him again, and again ; Sheridan sung, the man toasted his song, and fell senseless from his chair beneath the table. Sheridan rose very calmly from his seat, and said to his young friend—" Now we

will go up stairs." He followed him, and heard Sheridan say, as he passed through the hall, to his favourite servant, "Jack, take his hat, and give him to the watch !"

The youth's surprise was so great, that, on reaching the drawing-room, he requested some explanation of the affair. Sheridan smiled, and replied—"Oh, he's only the bailiff of a man who says falsely, that I owe him money."

On the following morning Sheridan rose very early and left London.

SHERIDAN AND THE STRANGER.

Sheridan was one day accosted by a gentlemanly-looking elderly man who had forgotten the name of the street to which he was going,—when the following dialogue ensued.

Stranger—"Sir, I wish to go to a street the name of which I have forgotten—it is a very uncommon name—pray, Sir, can you tell me of any such street near?"

Sheridan—"Perhaps, Sir, you mean *John Street*?"

Stranger—"No; it is a street with an unusual name."

Sheridan—"It can't be Charles Street?"

Stranger, a little impatiently—"It is not a common name—the most unusual name for a street."

Sheridan—"Surely, Sir, you are not looking for King Street?"

Stranger, growing more impatient—"I tell you, Sir, it is a street with a very odd name."

Sheridan—"Bless me, Sir, it is not Queen Street, is it?"

Stranger, evincing some degree of irritation—"Queen Street!—no, no! it is a sort of curious name, I tell you."

Sheridan—"I wish, Sir, I could assist you—let me think. It may be Oxford Street?"

Stranger getting testy—"Sir, for heaven's sake, think I keep telling you, that it is a street with any thing but a common name; every body knows Oxford Street."

Sheridan—"Perhaps, Sir, the street has no name after all."

Stranger—"No name, Sir!—Why I tell you it has—confound the name!"

Sheridan—"Really, Sir, I am very sorry that I am unable to assist you—but let me suggest Piccadilly."

The stranger could no longer restrain his irritation, but bounced away, exclaiming, "Oh damn't, what a thick-headed fellow!"—

Sheridan calling to him and bowing, replied, "Sir, I envy you your admirable memory,"—then walked on, enjoying his joke.*

A CIRCUMSTANCE RELATING TO SHERIDAN'S CELEBRATED SPEECH AGAINST WARREN HASTINGS.

It is said, that no copy remains of Sheridan's speech in the House of Commons on the conduct of Warren Hastings. Although Sheridan was careless of most things, from the documents

* It has been said, that the stranger was looking for Lamb's Conduit Street.

which he preserved relating to his early writings, it may be doubted whether some copy of that speech may not yet be found. There is no doubt that some overtures were made to him, towards the latter part of his life, relative to his speeches against that celebrated character, for he was overheard to say—"No, I have since shaken him by the hand, and we have drunk our wine together, and during my life it shall never be published."—He added, as he walked towards the window, "No, and I won't destroy it—money shall never tempt me to give it up."

What inference could be deduced from this, those more informed in the arcana of this affair may know. It seems that one highly favourable to his character, and illustrative of the jealous love in which he held his reputation, may be drawn from his expressions.

SHERIDAN—PHEASANT-SHOOTING.

The sports of the field were not familiar to Sheridan; but, as we have seen him conspicuous

as a fisherman, it may be as well to speak of him as a field sportsman. Sheridan was once on a visit to a great Norfolk 'Squire, and having nothing to do in the house, took it into his head to sally forth, fully equipped, to shoot pheasants. The gamekeeper who attended him, being aware of the estimation in which his master held his guest, immediately conducted him to an extensive turnip-field adjoining a plantation. Many minutes had not elapsed when the gamekeeper's hand was raised to one of the dogs, while he gently said "*To ho!*"—Sheridan, all anxiety to prove himself a shot, walked quickly up to the dog that was pointing, when up rose the bird; Sheridan fired one barrel at an acute angle from his object, the second at an obtuse angle. The keeper reloaded the gun, and in a few minutes up flew another bird; again Sheridan displayed equal dexterity. Bird got up after bird; Sheridan blazed away, right and left, but never touched a feather. At length, quite out of patience, he said to the keeper,

“Egad, I will give you a guinea, if I kill the next shot.” This sounded like a charm in the ear of the gamekeeper, who, being a shrewd fellow, and having a much lower estimate of Sheridan than when he started from the house, determined to try to gain the promised gold. He had observed that Sheridan allowed ten seconds to elapse before he pulled the trigger, and never moved the gun from the position in which it first was placed on reaching his shoulder. Presently up rose another pheasant; the keeper had placed himself advantageously, and fired at the same moment with Sheridan, and down fell the bird. Sheridan supposed that he had actually killed it, and directly threw down his gun, and rushed after his prey, which he seized by the leg and instantly set off for the house, in ecstasy at his success. Though the keeper laughed heartily, he followed him, and kept the secret until the following day, when he saw Sheridan, and, touching his hat, reminded him of his promise, pocketed the guinea, and then

told the anecdote to the amusement of the party staying there.

SHERIDAN'S ADDRESS TO H. R. H. THE PRINCE
REGENT.

It was always well known, that Sheridan preferred the Prince to the Whig party, which was the true reason of their never liking him. When the Whigs, in the plenitude of pride and unconstitutional assumption, vaunted of the style in which they would rule in Carlton Palace, he warned his friend and master of their intentions. He is said, in this instance, to have 'played false to his political friends;' to which it may be replied—that an unbecoming action cancels the bond, and leaves an intermediate party free to warn the friend who is to be injured, of his impending danger. Sheridan's Whig friends, high-minded as they really are, conducted themselves, on this point, in an unjustifiable and arrogant manner, and deserved to be exposed, as they afterwards were. This opinion the world

sanctions; and the Whigs themselves must admit that it has truth for its foundation. Their want of tact and judgment has wrecked the party. The warning was conveyed in the following pointed lines, altered from Lord Rochester:—

AN ADDRESS TO THE PRINCE,
BY THE LORDS GREY, GRENVILLE, &c. &c.

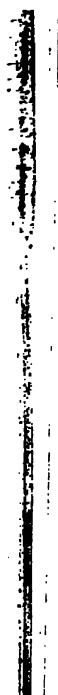
“ In all humility we crave,
Our Regent may become our slave;
And being so, we trust that *He*
Will thank us for our loyalty.
Then, if he 'll help us to pull down
His Father's dignity and crown,
We 'll make him, in some time to come,
The greatest Prince in Christendom.”

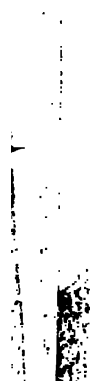
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